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WINTER COMFORTS

BLACKPOOL air is traditionally tonic: the atmosphere at this week's meeting of the Trades Union Congress has been such as to hearten the Labour Movement and, we hope, invigorate the Government. The keynote of the Conference was struck by Mr. Edwards in his presidential address, when he declared that "there can be no excuse for inaction or compromise; the Government's vital task is to establish and operate national and international Socialist principles in legislation *and administration*." A similar sense of urgency was voiced, as fraternal delegate, by Mr. Laski: either the Labour Party, he said, would demonstrate that democratic Socialist principles are valid in practice, or it would give way to other men and other methods. Not that the industrial wing of the Party showed any tendency towards factious criticism of the Government. On the contrary, the resolutions and reports from the General Council which Congress had before it were notably inspired by a desire to co-operate helpfully with the Government on the reconstruction front. Even in the vexed issue of the Essential Work Order delegates were willing, subject to necessary safeguards for the guaranteed week, to accept, as temporarily expedient, some prolongation of the naturally unpopular direction of labour.

But though Congress was manifestly out to encourage, and not embarrass, the Government, it would be a grave error to suppose that delegates assembled in a mood of unqualified satisfaction. With the adequacy of the long-term legislative plans outlined in the King's Speech there was no disposition to quarrel. It was on the immediate administrative performance of the Cabinet that criticism fastened; and the emergency resolution on demobilisation, passed by a unanimous vote, showed that Congress rightly appreciated that the Government's whole reconstruction programme—in housing, industrial production and exports alike—hangs on the speedy re-deployment of man-power. In calling for the urgent revision of the Bevin Plan along lines which this journal has repeatedly advocated, Congress was clearly far from satisfied that the "flexibility" promised by Mr. Attlee is being vouchsafed, or that Mr. Isaacs—legatee of a massive and maybe over-rigid mantle—is sufficiently ready to take risks in order to "get things moving."

If, as we expect, the Cabinet now goes far towards meeting the demand of Congress for a much quicker rate of Service releases, it will doubtless be criticised by its opponents for "yielding to T.U.C. pressure." For this it will have only itself to blame. In fact, the T.U.C., with a much clearer "public relations" sense than the Government's, has done no more than crystallise in this demobilisation issue the almost universal feeling among the Government's own supporters that more must be done, and quickly, to demonstrate that July 5th marked a real change in the objectives, methods and tempo of administration. Man-power may be the fundamental issue: it underlies every existing shortage—of houses, coal, transport and goods in shops; but there are other immediate factors which the Government, if it is wise, will keep in mind.

The people of this country are sensible, and have never entertained extravagant hopes of Utopia over-night; but they are tired, they lack many even of the material comforts which sustained them through Dunkirk and the early blitz, and the moral sanctions of total war have gone. In their place the Government has so far produced nothing more compelling than the warning that a painful period of stern austerity lies ahead, and the promise that in due course there will be a satisfying harvest of Socialist legislation. This is cold comfort for the coming winter. If Labour men and women are to put forth the sustained effort—both in work and self-denial—still needed to win the peace, they must have an earnest now of better things to come. Not only must they be given a greater impression (conveyed best, so far, by Mr. Shinwell and Sir Stafford Cripps) that "things are being done"; they must be given practical assurance that "their" Government has not forgotten them in the remoteness of Whitehall.

The interim actions which we would suggest for this purpose are partly legislative, partly administrative. As soon as Parliament re-assembles we should like to see two short Bills rushed through—one raising Old Age Pensions at least to the Beveridge level, the other providing for the payment of a special (limited period) allowance, without Means Test, to war-workers discharged through "redundancy." Legislation apart, Ministers should ask themselves insistently each morning whether more cannot be done, on lines of common-sense improvisation which are fully compatible with Socialist principles, to meet public wants. Emergency use of hostels to supplement houses; improvised means to improve public transport; the use of Service personnel to augment depleted staffs in telephone exchanges, on the railways, even perhaps in food shops; imports from the non-dollar area of a few more little luxuries for the modest home—these are only a few examples of the energising "winter comforts" which we have in mind.

No sensible person grudges the Government time to study its admittedly intricate problems, or will object to its looking before it leaps. But if he looks too long, a man may end by never leaping at all. Mistakes in well-intentioned improvisations and emergency expedients would be readily forgiven. What the Labour Movement would never pardon in its leaders would be undue timidity lest awkward precedents—e.g., in unemployment benefit rates—be established, or attachment so devoted to Parliamentary traditionalism and order that the imperative need for immediate instalments of practical action to help the common man got overlooked. Application of Socialist principles needs the human touch.

France and Western Europe

Plans for a renewed Anglo-French entente, on which Mr. Bevin is known to be working, obviously depend for their fruition on a common Franco-British attitude towards the major issues of European reconstruction. Capital importance, therefore, attaches to the statement made by General de Gaulle to the Paris correspondent of *The Times*, dealing with the future of the Ruhr and the Rhineland. The General, as was to be expected, makes French security his starting point; indeed, in one passage, he gives the impression of arguing that, because Germany has been truncated in the East, there must be a

"balancing" dismemberment in the West to stem the current of menacing German vitality. This might be interpreted as meaning that one act of folly necessitates another; but, in his approach to practical economic problems, General de Gaulle shows a welcome grasp of realities. Western Europe, he declares, is an economic complex to which the productive capacity of the Ruhr coal basin is essential. In German hands Ruhr coal is a ready-made instrument of domination. Placed under control of an international authority, which would allot output to the various countries of Western Europe (including Germany) according to their ascertained needs, the Ruhr could become a focus of European co-operation; and the same considerations call for internationalisation of the Rhine water-way and its transport. With this argument—assuming that there is to be no *political* severance of the Ruhr from the Reich, and that the International Authority's aim would be to raise productivity and not to so limit it as to achieve the maximum "pastoralisation" of Germany—we are disposed to agree; and we are glad to note that General de Gaulle apparently considers that 50 per cent. of the Ruhr coal output might appropriately be allocated to the Reich.

The Price of Annexations

It is when General de Gaulle discusses the political future of the Rhineland that we question whether his views should be endorsed either by the British or, still less, the French Left. He proposes that France should continue indefinitely to occupy the whole of German territory on the west bank of the Rhine as far north as Cologne; and that, north of Cologne, additional German territory should be placed permanently under the "strategic and political" control of Belgium and Holland, whose "natural glacis" it represents. This is an immense and highly debatable claim. Ultimately, the General hopes, these areas might "regain their autonomy," and they would never forfeit their "cultural independence." Even so, it is certain that they would be the home of a German irredentist movement unless, through incorporation in France, the population enjoyed a much higher standard of living than Germans remaining in the Reich. Has France at her disposal personnel qualified or willing to create such conditions in annexed provinces? Reports reaching London from her present Occupied Zone suggest that she has not, and that famine and misery are spreading. Were that the result of annexation, then the machinery of a Police State would have to be applied to keeping the German minority under control. Could such a regime exist in isolation within a social-democracy? We fear that French militarists and reactionaries would be quick to extend to the whole of France a system found necessary in the troublesome enclave. France would be in danger of forfeiting her own real political freedom for the sake of an illusory "security."

British Policy in the Ruhr

Meanwhile, the British Military Government in the Ruhr has at long last arrested some 40 of the industrialists, including Herr Stinnes. Having consistently refused to interfere with the managements on the ground that it would upset production, they now argue that the arrests are necessary if production is to be increased. The move is, of course, welcome, but it will be completely ineffective if it is not followed by a purge of those managers and foremen with whom the miners actually come into contact, and the organisation both of a miners' and a transport workers' union. It is lamentable that obstacles are still being put in the way of the proposed visit by representatives of the International Mine-workers' and Transport Workers' Federations. Without their expert advice, it is difficult to see how German Trade Unionism can be revived, and German coal production stimulated this winter. When we recall that permission has already been granted for contacts between British clergy and German pastors, and that a visit by British Catholics has been announced with the purpose of congratulating their German brethren on their resistance to Hitler, the War Office sluggishness with regard to the Trade Union delegation seems positively scandalous.

Famine in Germany

In a mood of indifferent fatalism, reminiscent of Bengal, the Allied authorities in Germany await the winter famine. Burgomasters have been ordered to have mass graves dug now, because when winter comes the workers will lack the strength to dig them. In some towns, the mortality has already reached famine level. In Berlin, during the first month of the Four-Power occupation, the figure was 61 per thousand. In that month, out of 609 infants under the age of one, 361 died. Conditions in the countryside, where the peasants are hoarding their food, or selling it to the black market, are naturally better. In part, the coming catastrophe is an unavoidable consequence of the sudden release last spring of the slave labour on which German agriculture had come to rely, of the damage to the transport system, and of the bad weather last month. But another major factor, which could have been prevented by Allied action, was the Polish seizure of Germany's eastern granary—chief supplier of potatoes and sugar beet as well. This move—which the British Government agreed to at Potsdam—has turned a food shortage into a famine. The expulsion of the German inhabitants is making things worse. It is essential to the health of Europe this winter that the Great Powers should at once enforce on the Poles their decision that further expulsions should cease.

Austria and the South Tirol

The first task that confronts the Council of Foreign Ministers, the conclusion of peace with Italy, raises at once two issues vital to her neighbour Austria. She must enjoy unhampered use of the port of Trieste, and she ought to recover the South Tirol. It went to Italy solely for strategical reasons. These are obsolete to-day, for no one would now propose to build up Italy as a military Power, nor in the age of the atomic bomb has the defence of the Brenner Pass its old importance. The Tirolese character of this region is beyond dispute; even the Italian census of 1921 showed only 25,000 Italian-speaking inhabitants as against 212,000 who spoke German. Brutal though Mussolini's methods were, they could not destroy the Austrian culture and sympathies of this immense majority. Hitler transferred about 80,000 of them to distant regions of Central Europe. To-day they have tramped back and are now waiting on the wrong side of the Brenner for leave to return to their homes. The Council will also have to make up its mind on what terms to recognise Dr. Renner's Cabinet as the provisional Government of the whole of Austria. Composed as it is of Socialists, Catholics and Communists, it fairly reflects the main trends of opinion. Dr. Renner's letter in Wednesday's *Times* was a conclusive answer to biased and ill-informed attacks of Lord Vansittart. Austria can live only as a member of a wider international economic whole. "With joy," he writes, "Austria will from now on turn to the new World Organisation for security . . . and with this the previous *Anschluss* tendencies—dependence on Budapest, Rome, Berlin, Moscow—are over and done for."

Mr. Truman's Message

Having to all appearance packed his administration with "safe" political mediocrities, Mr. Truman has created a stir in the United States by presenting Congress in his voluminous Message with a programme of reconversion measures reminiscent in some respects of the New Deal. True, he concedes something to the popular clamour to let the country reconvert itself under unfettered private enterprise: "all possible". Government controls are to be removed. But he insists that the transition must be orderly; that some planning of priorities and allocations must be retained; and that there must be a policy of "holding the line" on prices and rents as well as wages. Still more surprisingly, he asks for early resumption of a vast nation-wide programme of public works of the type sponsored by President Roosevelt. Indeed, both in length and content, the Message is an impressive document. But it must be remembered that it is not the programme of a Government with a working majority, but the basis for negotiations between the Executive and the Legislature. Only by fighting Congress can a President put through a consistent programme; and on what points will Mr. Truman be willing to fight? The danger is that Congress will lick off the jam and refuse the crusts. Will it be possible to retain any effective form of rationing of consumers, even though Congress votes the additional $337 million for UNRRA.? And will rapid reconversion be accompanied by respectable unemployment benefits or followed by a genuine full employment policy? The road from White House to Congress is well-paved with excellent programmes; but this one will doubtless have its uses for the Democratic Party's election platform in November.

America's Debtors

In its bearing on the aftermath of Lend-Lease, the Presidential Message threw little light on the probable course of the talks now begun by Lord Halifax and Lord Keynes in Washington. According to Mr. Truman, negotiations for the cash purchase of goods "in the pipe-line" were proceeding satisfactorily. He urged Congress to recognise that, in the main, Lend-Lease objections could not be settled by America's debtors in dollars, but this did not mean that they would all necessarily be cancelled: "settlements" must be reached which permitted "a sound world-wide economy," as well as contributing to international peace and the "national security" of the United States. This sounds like the prelude to hard bargaining over the Ottawa Agreement, though it remains to be seen what the Farm Bloc in Congress would say if the idea were raised of reciprocal reductions in the Smoot-Hawley tariff. As we have repeatedly insisted, acceptance by Britain of financial aid from America would be fatal if, as its price, we were tied to obligations beyond our power to fulfil. If we lack dollars and cannot afford to go on borrowing them, we must perforce "discriminate" in our foreign trade—even at the cost of "frictions" which Lord Keynes deplores. We have so far done little to explore possibilities of a large expansion of trade with the U.S.S.R. Here, as was illustrated by a British firm's recent loss of an important three-year constructional contract in Moscow, more Government credit facilities are required. But these credits are needed only in sterling, which presents no insuperable difficulties. The essential thing, as Lord Keynes has emphasised, is to eschew the "soft and deceptive expedient" of dollar loans—above all, if they are secured at the cost of forfeiting our freedom to pursue Socialist policy in foreign trade.

Round the Japanese Empire

While the surrender of the Japanese forces has proceeded smoothly at Singapore, Hongkong and in the Dutch islands, the Australian Government has published a horrifying catalogue of the cruelties inflicted on prisoners and women, and Dr. Evatt has expressed his country's profound anxiety about the American attitude to Japanese Militarism. Although General MacArthur has made it clear that he expects prompt and absolute obedience to his orders, he does not contemplate the setting up of a military administration on the model followed in Germany.

This in a country so unfamiliar as Japan may be expedient, and would be excusable if the Americans showed the slightest intention of encouraging indigenous Japanese movements against the Militarists and the Financial Trusts. In Siam the outlook is reassuring, for it turns out that the Regent and most of his people bent to the superior force of the Japanese only in so far as they were compelled, while maintaining helpful relations under cover with the Allies, to whom they supplied valuable information. A guerilla outbreak was timed to begin, had not the enemy's surrender preceded it. But in French Indo-China much tact will be required if we are to avoid the sort of complications that arose in Syria. An Annamite revolt has broken out against the French, while there are within reach British and Chinese forces, but only weak remnants of the former French garrison. Every facility should be offered to the French Government to send to the spot with our assistance such forces as may be required. In Korea the inhabitants have been bitterly disappointed by the decision of the Americans to leave the Japanese civil administration in control. Its armed police has fired on a crowd and killed ten Koreans who were celebrating their liberation. The explanation may be that rival Korean parties claim the right to set up a provisional government. Till the outlook is clearer, should not the Americans themselves assume control?

Enemy Aliens

The letter in our correspondence columns from P. H., on the subject of naturalisation of enemy aliens, is timely. Many Germans and Austrians have done outstanding work during the war, in intelligence, propaganda and in scientific research, to name only a few instances. But the Home Office has refused to take cognisance of the facts, and only a few score naturalisations have been granted since 1939. This is not only grossly ungrateful—it is stupid, too, since it reduces the number of British experts available for responsible posts in the German and Austrian Control Commissions, which are desperately short of qualified personnel. The American method is much more sensible in this respect. Any foreigner who has served in the American Forces for six months and given satisfaction is automatically entitled to citizenship. We shall never go as far as that. But Mr. Chuter Ede should ask the various Departments concerned to prepare lists of enemy aliens who have earned their citizenship by meritorious war service, and then grant it, not according to the routine procedure, but as a token of the nation's gratitude. It would be far more appreciated than the proposed medal.

Cigarettes and Currencies

If soldiers and airmen in the armies of occupation in Europe feel sore at the cessation of duty-free gift parcels of tobacco and cigarettes, civilians at home—their patience tried by queues and "under-the-counter" sales—may be forgiven if they acidly retort: "You've had it." Certainly the revelation by the Board of Trade's Tobacco Adviser, that recently a single firm had been despatching nearly 300 million cigarettes overseas duty-free every month, suggests that many recipients were not smoking their "gifts," particularly since issues—free and on payment through Naafi—are fairly liberal, and will continue. Cigarettes, in fact, have become the most acceptable currency on the Continent and have fed the black market. Smokers at home are now promised more nearly normal supplies by Christmas—a questionable off-set to the present sharp cut in milk supplies. The monetary effect abroad remains to be seen. Cigarettes have reacted on currency in a way for which Gresham made no allowance.

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BALKAN REALITIES

When suddenly the British people swung Left and put Labour into power, the Russians, along with the Left-wing parties throughout Europe, waited to see what would happen. Was British Labour "social-democratic" in the bad old meaning of that term—ready to side with the forces of the Right in order to fight the Communists? Or was it Socialist in the sense that it would regard reaction as a worse enemy than Communism?

Mr. Bevin's first statement on foreign policy seemed to give a disquieting answer to these questions. Whatever interpretation we in London may put on his words, both to the Right and to the Left in Eastern Europe they could bear only one meaning: his policy was Mr. Eden's policy, a united front with the Americans to stem the tide of Russian Communism. Everywhere east of Prague and Vienna, Mr. Bevin's speech brought hope to those Right-wing parties whose power seemed to have been smashed by the German defeat, and dismay to the Left.

We are not concerned at the moment with the rights and wrongs of this estimation of Mr. Bevin's foreign policy. We ourselves believe that it does Mr. Bevin a good deal less than justice. But what is essential at this critical period, when the first conference of the Foreign Ministers is meeting in London, is to appreciate the mental atmosphere of Eastern Europe. As our correspondent in Belgrade notes in a despatch on a later page, the Tito Government and its supporters are profoundly and openly distrustful of Anglo-American policy, and in some ways actively hostile to the West. Government circles in Belgrade find it hard to forget that we continued to support Mihailovitch long after we had positive proof that he was collaborating with the Axis; that we then for many months supported both Mihailovitch and the Partisans, and that, even when we ceased supplying Mihailovitch, we tolerated around the Yugoslav Government in London and King Peter some very dubious characters. It may sound fantastic in London, but it is a fact that the Tito Government is convinced that the British and Americans are secretly supporting Right-wing conspiracies. When we add to this the undeniable contrast between the food supplies poured into Greece by UNRRA and the trickle permitted to Yugoslavia, it is possible to begin to understand the gulf which separates the British and the Yugoslav people. We may ridicule the idea that Mr. Bevin is a party to Anglo-American preparations for the Third World War against Russia. The Tito regime is convinced he is.

What of the so-called satellite countries? Broadly speaking, the governments and their supporters share to the full the conviction of the Tito regime that we and the Americans are preparing for a war against Bolshevism. In all these countries the defeat of Germany brought with it the overthrow of the whole political and social system which had been paramount since 1918 and which supported Germany after 1940. Not only were the old politicians discredited, but the State apparatus, including the police, broke down, particularly at the higher levels. A revolutionary situation existed and still exists, whatever the superficial appearances. Anarchy was avoided by the substitution, under very thin democratic disguises, of Left-wing dictatorships, usually under Communist control. And this revolution, as a result of a long tradition of bureaucratic brutality, was accompanied by a very full measure of savage reprisals. In all this the old Peasant parties played an insignificant part, and their leaders are for the most part now in opposition. They had failed to accomplish the Greek Revolution in 1918, and during the war they had left to others the organisation of real resistance. Men like Maniu in Rumania to-day are naturally indignant when they see new Peasant parties formed, and—even worse—attempting to achieve what they failed even to attempt—a common policy with the industrial workers. On the other hand, the Resistance leaders who are now in power and whose natural orientation is towards Russia only too easily jump to the assumption that British Labour is backing anti-Bolshevik reaction, when they observe our behaviour in Greece and hear that Mr. Bevin is demanding "suitable" Governments in Bulgaria, Rumania and Yugoslavia.

What can be done to improve the situation? In the first place, it is essential to enlarge our sources of information about these countries. In Yugoslavia we have the nucleus of a good Embassy, but it is quite unusually difficult, in the atmosphere of Belgrade, to obtain a fair picture of the situation. Elsewhere we are represented only by British Missions which too often confine their contacts to a small set of embittered representatives of the former ruling class. If we think, as we all do, that British democracy should be properly understood in these countries, then we must not only establish diplomatic representation as soon as possible, but we must enable British people other than diplomats to visit these countries and study their problems sympathetically.

In the second place, we must seek to appreciate the achievements of these governments—as well as their failings—against the background of Balkan realities. Granted, for instance, that the Groza Government in Bucharest is certainly not representative, we should set off against this fact the treatment of the large Hungarian minority in Transylvania, which has already made possible the rapprochement between Hungary and Rumania, vital to peace and stability in the Balkan basin. Nor should we forget that the purge of the bureaucracy, which it is now carrying out, was as vital a prerequisite of democracy for Rumania as the purge of Nazis in Germany. It was the omission of any reference to these achievements which made Mr. Bevin's abrupt statement on Rumania seem so reactionary.

The Hungarian Government also has far more to be said for it than Mr. Bevin allowed. It includes representatives of every major party except active German collaborators and the Bethlen clique. If it is dominated by the Left, this is far less due to Communist control than to the radical mood of the Hungarian people, including the landless peasants who have received land from this "undemocratic" government after a century of unsuccessful agitation. Mr. Bevin has frequently stressed the importance of economic freedom, but he did not mention that up to July 1st about 3½ million acres had been distributed to some 600,000 Hungarian families, and that another 500,000 acres would be distributed in the coming months. When a Labour Foreign Secretary attacks an all-party Left-wing Government as undemocratic, and completely fails to mention such a land reform, can he be surprised if Eastern Europe assumes that Britain is not interested in Hungarian democracy?

In the third place, we should dissipate the impression that we are determined to use Social-Democratic or the old Peasant parties in a systematic effort to split the Left. It would be fatal to pay any attention to Bulgarian or Rumanian Social-Democrats who represent precisely nothing in their own countries but are only too anxious to win importance as trouble makers. Indeed, even in Hungary, where the Social-Democrats, at least in the towns, are a genuine force, British intervention on their behalf would almost certainly have the effect of reproducing the present Greek situation—the division of the country into two irreconcilable extremes.

Mr. Bevin has let it be known that he is anxious that Europe should not be divided into spheres of influence. If he is to achieve this object he will have to break down the profound misunderstandings and fears of Anglo-American policy which poison the atmosphere in South-Eastern Europe. So far, he has only confirmed them.

LABOUR AND THE COLONIES

THE advent of a Labour Government aroused great expectations among the 60 million people in our colonial empire. As one Nigerian wrote to me after the news of the Labour victory—"At last God has answered our prayers." From Colony after Colony come letters and newspaper articles expressive of hopes that at last this problem and that will be tackled, at last these forgotten people will come into their own. Mr. Attlee's Government is to be their salvation.

Can Labour possibly fulfil these expectations? If dramatic actions are hoped for, there must inevitably be disappointment. The Colonies do not present any easily measurable problem, any fixed mark that the mind can grasp, as many of our home problems do. By and large the Ministers for Health, Education, Fuel and Power know pretty well what is asked of them. But the Colonial Secretary? He has to tackle housing, education, health, production *and* constitutional reform in forty different territories—each with its own inner complexities of race, religion, illiteracy, pests, disease and grinding poverty. There is no spectacular gesture which can possibly deal with all these problems. The day is long past when any knowledgable person imagines that declarations of "freedom" or "self-government" will in themselves bring happiness. The advance towards self-government is only part of the intricate process of bringing to the Colonies the whole gamut of social amenities, knowledge, civic responsibility and prosperity.

What, then, can a Labour Colonial Secretary do? His is a task concerned with a thousand details, but he can begin by applying to these details humane and generous principles. From the start he can set his face against any manifestation of colour discrimination—social, industrial, administrative. If this alone were sincerely carried through, it would transform our relations with the colonial peoples. He can safeguard with vigilance every form of civil liberty—free political and industrial association, a free press, free movement without humiliating "pass laws." He can press on towards self-government in many Colonies which are becoming increasingly ready for it. He can secure an equitable distribution of the existing wealth of the Colonies between overseas capitalists and settlers and the colonials themselves. This would mean a new mining policy; commodity control schemes to secure a fair price for the peasant; the encouragement of co-operative producers and marketing organisations; a strong land policy in favour of the indigenous people in those countries where overseas immigrants are attracted.

How would this application of Labour principles work out in a few selected cases? Take Kenya, for example. If we were determined to allow no race discrimination, we would refuse to let any further land be taken up by immigrants until all the Africans were satisfactorily settled. We would give no special encouragement to "settlers"—no settlement schemes, no easy credit, no marketing or production subsidies, no special voice in the Councils of Government. The settlers in Kenya who are content to stay there as ordinary citizens will of course do so; but it would be contrary to all our principles to give them privileges because they happened to possess white skins.

Another example—the Gold Coast. This Colony is dependent on the export of gold and cocoa, but very little of the value of either remains to benefit the African people. We would either put the gold-mines under public ownership, or so control their operations as to ensure that the greater part of the profit remained at home in the form of wages and taxes. And we would introduce a cocoa marketing scheme designed primarily in the interests of the cocoa producer and the overseas consumer, and not of the broker or shipper or exporter. Everywhere we would bring Africans on to the Legislative Councils, until they were everywhere in the dominating majority to match the preponderance of their numbers; and then from representative government we would rapidly pass over to responsible government with a Cabinet system.

But even if all this were done—all the abuses removed and the principles of justice everywhere triumphant—the Colonies would still be woefully poor; the overriding problem of their poverty would barely have been touched. They can only become prosperous by *producing* more, by up-to-date methods of agriculture, by new industries. In short, an agrarian and an industrial revolution is needed, and such revolutions cannot take place overnight. The most the Government can hope to do is to start the ball rolling. Maybe Public Development Corporations could be created, with the duty of providing all the facilities—sites, power, buildings, credit—for setting up secondary industries, much as the Trading Estates try to attract industries to the Special Areas of Britain. Or a Development Corporation might operate in an agricultural area—helping the peasants to acquire equipment, seeds and fertilisers, providing power, demonstrating new methods, running processing factories, supervising grading and packing, and undertaking marketing. The capital could be raised by public loans (in this country and in the Colonies themselves), secured perhaps by some of the funds available under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act—though most of these funds would still of course be needed for the variety of health, education, and irrigation schemes on which they are now being expended.

Again, let no one suppose that the results would be spectacular; for many of the favourable objective conditions for progress are lacking, both in the Colonies and, at the present period, at home. There is the dearth of scientists and skilled personnel and equipment—a grave obstacle to rapid action. Bricks cannot be made without straw; and in the Colonies there are communal and human problems which do not fit into easy patterns of "progress" designed in Whitehall. Nevertheless an impressive start could be made. With a steady, painstaking removal of abuses, with convincing progress towards self-government everywhere, and with the wheels of the economic revolution set turning, an impact could be made on the life of every Colony, and the present vicious circle of poverty, disease, illiteracy, stagnation, and then again poverty, could be finally broken.

There is no reason why the Colonial Office under a Labour Minister should not accomplish this. Within the Colonial Service are many energetic officials chafing for action. Many of the young educated Colonials are anxiously seeking outlets for their capacities. Thousands of men who have learnt new trades and ideas in the Army are returning home, and will not be content to go back to the old conditions. Ultimately, the decisive factor is the *will* in Britain to achieve these things.

RITA HINDEN

PLANNING AND RED TAPE

ONE of the milder misrepresentations used by anti-Socialist candidates in the General Election was the suggestion that State planning and nationalisation are the same thing. (One of them told a large audience that the coal shortage was due to the fact that the mines were nationalised some years ago!) The general theme was that the manifest inconveniences of wartime were due to State planning, and that they would continue indefinitely under a Labour Government committed to a planned economy. Some went even further. They argued that since the "partial nationalisation" of wartime had resulted in so much "bureaucracy," real nationalisation would mean much more "bureaucracy" than anything we had ever known before.

This is precisely the opposite of the truth, for a great deal of wartime red tape was directly due to the partial nature of wartime planning. A study of the machinery of industrial controls built up since 1939 shows that *nationalisation will not mean more red tape, but less.*

Much of the administration of the nation's industry during the last few years has been based not on planning of output and allocation of resources but on the co-ordination and checking of the initiative of individual contractors. Beneath the surface trimmings of control, there has often been a free field for manufacturers to make decisions on the holding and utilisation of labour, materials and capacity. In making these decisions, managements have had a divided loyalty—to the nation, and to their shareholders. While the war effort called for the utmost pooling of research and invention, there was a widespread (and not unnatural) reluctance to disclose trade secrets to potential post-war competitors. On cost-plus contracts, and in firms in which on-cost allowances are calculated as a fixed percentage of direct labour costs, there is a financial incentive to dissipate, rather than to conserve, labour. The financing of contracts has created an artificial, and often harmful, distinction between expenditure out of capital and expenditure out of revenue.

This is not to suggest that entrepreneurs have always put their own interests before those of the nation at war. On the contrary, many of them have made some very real sacrifices, though the willingness to do so has markedly decreased during the last year or two. The point is that the superimposition of controls on a profit economy has created financial incentives to beat the controls. The controllers know this, and they have therefore created elaborate paperwork mechanisms to protect themselves (and the nation) against being "out-smarted." If central planning were so basic and so thorough that it left no free markets in the industry concerned, or if, alternatively, nobody had any incentive to exploit such free markets as planning-defects created, this danger of the State machine's being out-smarted would disappear, and a lot of the red-tape checking mechanisms could disappear with it.

Thus, if the profit on Government contracts was based not on how much labour is used, but on how efficiently it is used, we should not need Labour Supply Inspectors to comb through factories to see if everyone is working. Indeed, if labour allocations were made on a factual assessment of the labour demands imposed by a contract (a task which is well within the scope of modern methods and equipment), and not on the basis of the contractor demanding what *he* thinks he wants, there would be no need for the forms and inspections designed to "vet" those demands. And, in general, if the machinery of labour allocation had worked in practice, instead of being partly theoretical, there would have been no need for employers to fill up forms telling the Labour Supply Officers what labour they had, since those officers would have those figures from official sources. Or finally, to take a special and highly important case in the field of labour utilisation, if manufacturers had not been obsessed with the urge (which was a hang-over from pre-war and a preparation for post-war) to "get one over" on their competitors, it would not have been necessary for the Ministry of Labour to use some of its most skilled personnel to ferret out research and design workers, urgently needed for the war effort, who were hidden away doing work on *sub-rosa*, unofficial (and often post-war commercial) projects.

Much the same considerations apply to materials, purchased parts and manufacturing capacity. There are four major loopholes in the machinery of material allocations which make possible (at least marginally) a free market in raw materials, and contractors have an incentive to play this market. The result is, once again, that the Controls have had to set up an elaborate

machinery of forms, checking and inspection of contractors' stocks of controlled materials.

Again, the large volume of work done on detailed costing, and on the checking of cost figures, is necessitated not by central planning, but only by the fact that it is a profit-making industry which is being planned. In a nationalised industry, costing is not a financial mechanism but only an efficiency-checking mechanism, and as such it is much simpler.

The conclusions are that partial planning is more involved than full planning, and that control without ownership involves more "bureaucracy" than public ownership. When businessmen complain of "bureaucracy" they mean three things: forms, inspectors and cost checking; and all of these have, to a large extent, been due not to State control but to State self-protection against vitiation of its control in the interests of individual profits and position. Most of the red tape, in fact, is tied round dividend warrants, and will disappear as public controls give way to public ownership. IAN MIKARDO

A LONDON DIARY

I was invited the other day to be present at the third anniversary of the opening of one of Coventry's largest hostels, and was impressed, not merely by the excellence of the meal I was given—it was, I was assured, a normal supper—but by the immense possibility which these hostels provide for temporary housing. There are hundreds of them up and down the country, the property for the most part of the Ministry of Aircraft Production and the Ministry of Supply, but managed by the National Hostels Association, a public corporation responsible to the Ministry of Works. They were erected to provide accommodation for workers directed to areas where no alternative lodgings were available. In Coventry alone there are no fewer than nine, with accommodation for 16,000 persons. The one I visited had room for about 900 workers, both men and women. It was lavishly constructed with separate sleeping quarters for men and women, dining halls, assembly halls, lounges and a sick bay. Undoubtedly the war-worker directed to Coventry lived far better for 25*s.* a week in one of these hostels than most of the people in Coventry itself. It would certainly take at least three years' intensive building to provide new temporary houses for 16,000 people in Coventry. I was amazed, therefore, to hear that there is no Government plan for the use of these hostels as temporary accommodation for returning soldiers or for the thousands of directees who want to come home but cannot do so because there is nowhere to live. Whitehall seems to regard them as surplus Government property to be disposed of now the emergency is over. Some of them are empty, others half empty, and others are being taken over by local authorities or Government departments, often for uses which have nothing to do with housing. Lewis Silkin should act speedily and work out a plan for preserving the National Hostels Association, and converting the accommodation so that married couples can be housed. Such a plan would produce more temporary housing in the next few months than we can hope to build in years, and would make the returning soldier feel that something had really been done for him.

* * *

If Mr. George Isaacs read a tenth of the letters about Demob. which reach this office from the Services, he would feel like Alice with the Red Queen's inexorable "Faster! Faster!" dinning in her ears. From men serving at home the letters all protest at "unemployment camouflaged in uniform"; futile fatigues devised by commanding officers to kill time; week after week spent uselessly while useful jobs are waiting to be done. A sapper, who learned during the war to cut neat capers with a bulldozer, asks why he should be employed in weeding the paths of the improvised garden of a Sussex camp when he might be clearing sites for houses. From men of all sorts of pre-war occupations, who have homes and jobs to return to, comes a rising chorus of complaint: the present snail's pace of "orderly" release means months and months more of frustrate idleness, while industry and transport are hamstrung by manpower shortage. Above all, these men cannot see why the demobilisation of a whole group should be held up while repatriation of a small percentage serving overseas is delayed by lack of transport. Why not pay double time, they ask, to all Servicemen held up overseas beyond their due release date? Nothing would stimulate the staff of Movement Control more effectively to speed up transport facilities. From abroad the burden of correspondents' letters is complete inability to understand how our occupational commitments can require us still to have nearly four million men and women in uniform at the end of this year. The feeling seems to be general, though I daresay quite unwarranted, that "They" don't appreciate how riling it is to have even a month or two added to three or more years' separation from wife and family. Troops in Italy seem to be particularly embittered by official reference to transport shortage. One correspondent writes:

> My window overlooks one of the main roads from Italy into France—only a few miles away. An admirable road, but there's not a thing in sight on it. You never see an Army truck carrying along it a single British soldier bound for England and demobilisation. Yet there are thousands and thousands of Army trucks standing, like ours, unused in Italy, with their drivers mounting guard on them and carrying out futile "spit and polish" maintenance.

What about it, Mr. Lawson?

* * *

I have just had the opportunity to talk to a number of men in the engineering world about the problem of reconversion. As I expected, their first cry was for draughtsmen, just as the first cry of the Local Authorities is for architects and surveyors (by the way, I hear that Aneurin Bevan has at last got his way, and they will be released from the Services under Class B.) Their second demand—and they were unanimous about it—surprised me. "Foundry workers," they said, "that's the bottleneck." Apparently, cast-iron moulds are not in great demand for armament production, but are essential for peacetime engineering. The work is skilled, dirty, and unpleasant, and not too well paid. Hence, the acute shortage. Yet at this moment, foundry workers are being called up for military service. Attention, Mr. Isaacs!

* * *

A new organisation, "Save Europe Now," invites anyone willing to submit to ration cuts this winter, in order to assist the women and children of Europe, to send a postcard to 144, Southampton Row, London. The appeal is signed, among others, by Victor Gollancz, the Bishop of Chichester, and the Master of Balliol. I feel certain there are tens of thousands of people who will send in their postcards; but I am equally sure that, were I Ben Smith, I would refuse to contemplate a reduced ration, especially in view of the fuel shortage. Production in this country is already declining owing to overfatigue, and it will not assist Europe to make it decline still further. This seems to me a case where voluntary and not compulsory sacrifice is the right solution. "Save Europe Now," would save many more lives if it turned itself into an organisation for collecting food and clothing parcels for distribution in famine areas. There are tens of thousands of people who have been sending parcels to prisoners of war for many years and who could easily be persuaded, as a thanksgiving for the return of the prisoners, to continue their sacrifice throughout this winter, and devote it to the women and children of Europe. But I hope the scheme will not be confined to women and children. A German Trade Unionist pointed out to me this week the desperate plight of the anti-Fascists released from concentration camps. Unlike the rest of Germany, they have been systematically undernourished, many of them for years. Yet they are expected to survive this winter on the normal German ration of 800—1,000 calories a day. The Swiss Workers' Relief has started sending them food parcels, but the Swiss Trade Unions cannot do the job single-handed. There are only a few thousand of these Germans, who are people whom we shall need more than all others for the work of reconstruction. Could not the Trade Union and Co-operative movements launch a special campaign to look after them?

* * *

Last week, a correspondent suggested that a fine way for people to express their indebtedness to H. G. Wells would be to invite subscriptions to an endowment for any branch of scientific or social study that Mr. Wells might choose. Since then a number of letters have come in, supporting this proposal. More than one of the correspondents say they have already set aside a sum of money for whatever purpose might be selected. All of them ask for a more specific suggestion. But it seems unlikely that one will be forthcoming. Wells has views of his own. He says: "Commemorative scholarships are unnecessary. People should either commemorate themselves or vanish from the scene." I don't know whether this means that the idea will be dropped; I don't see how it can prosper if Wells doesn't wish to give it his blessing.

* * *

What is unconscious anti-Bolshevism? How often one senses its influence in Government departments and military headquarters, but how difficult it is to demonstrate its existence to the sceptical Tory. Here is an example which came to my notice recently. The British Army still operates in a liberated country which shall be nameless. A few weeks ago, a number of prisoners of war were repatriated to the capital of the country via Russia. They told the usual stories of thefts of valuables by the Russian troops who dealt with them. A British Intelligence Officer in a report on the morale of the capital observed, "These stories are the chief topic of conversation in buses and trams. Subversive agents are attempting to counteract them." I must in fairness add that the last sentence was deleted from the report before it was distributed.

* * *

It is a pity that we have not, and cannot have, population statistics of the cabbage white butterfly and caterpillar over a period of time. At any rate one has only to go out into one's garden to look at what should be cabbages, broccoli and brussels sprouts to see that this is a peak year for that most devastating of caterpillars. Where last year there were tens of them, there must be this year thousands. I picked 80 caterpillars off what remained of a single broccolo plant. Of most plants only the ribs remain, a mere vegetable skeleton. The damage done must be enormous, for the plague is, I hear, very widespread over Southern England. In my neighbourhood most of the cauliflower and broccoli, and a high proportion of cabbage, are irretrievably ruined, but brussels sprouts may win through. I suppose the warm spring had something to do with the tremendous increase of this butterfly and caterpillar. The sudden increase in numbers of other butterflies and moths is harder to explain. For instance, until this year I have only seen the superb Convolvulus Hawk Moth in my garden once or twice during the last 25 years, but during the last month one has been visiting the tobacco plants or beating itself against the lighted window on eleven separate evenings.

* * *

Scene: Clapham Common one recent Sunday afternoon. A British-Israelite orator addressing a small group of people asked rhetorically "If you, the British people, are not Israel, what are you?" A small boy in the crowd piped up: "We're Labour, Missus!" POLYCRITIC

INSIDE YUGOSLAVIA

[Mr. Lehrman's earlier cable from Belgrade appeared in our issue of August 25th.]

In the *Ruski Tsar*, the fashionable cafe on Prince Michael Street, disgruntled bourgeois exchange sneers against the parvenus who now live on Dedinje Hill. The Partisans have taken over the villas of the aristocracy and it is a source of bitter mirth among to-day's "underprivileged" that one high official who has spent most of his adult life living in gaols or hiding from the police in cellars, now lives in two mansions with twenty servants. Less prejudiced critics will not begrudge the leaders of the regime their creature comforts. The Partisan chiefs are working hard for long hours amid their opulence.

I did not believe the stories which were hurled at me on arrival here about the persecution of those Yugoslavs who do not regard the British and Americans as enemies of the nation—until proof of them appeared right under my nose. The celebration of United States Army Air Force Day on August 1st was organised by a group of Belgrade youths. The auditorium was draped with Yugoslav and American flags. The Air Force film *Memphis Belle* was shown and two young men delivered pro-American speeches—both passed by the censor. Next day, both were arrested by O.Z.N.A. and held incommunicado.

For forty-eight hours I tried vainly to see the police authorities or at least discover the charges against the prisoners. I grew steadily more unpopular with functionaries who expressed pained surprise that the correspondent of liberal British and American papers should waste his time on such minor matters. On the third day, I was officially informed that the youths had been arrested because of "numerous previous reports" that they had been associated with Chetniks. I enquired why nothing was done about these alleged reports until the morning after the pro-American demonstration. No reply—except that the prisoners were suddenly released and the case closed — which is the most eloquent of replies.

The top-ranking Partisans say in private that the masses have disliked the Allies ever since the days during the Occupation when, after fighting against combined German-Chetnik forces and seeing their villages burned down by Chetniks, they gathered round the radio and heard London extolling the heroic resistance of the Chetniks against the invaders. Nor has the record of Allied occupation of Trieste and their attitude to other Yugoslav claims helped in this respect, Partisan leaders will add; but they say they deplore this bad feeling on the part of the people. Leaving aside the question of accuracy in this appraisal of popular sentiment (I wore my uniform at a village festival just outside Belgrade yesterday; bolder peasants hugged me and the more timid kissed my sleeve) it is legitimate to ask why official organs like the police and press are systematically anti-Ally.

I cannot confirm or deny continuous reports of terror in the provinces because I've been unable to go and see. Correspondents need passes to travel more than a few miles from Belgrade. On August 15th, I applied to go to South Serbia and Macedonia. A week later my request was rejected without explanation. In view of the official assertion that newspaper-men can go anywhere in Yugoslavia, I protested to the Ministry of Information. Minister Kosanovitch then told me that he had just discussed it with Tito and thought that the rejection would be rescinded. Nothing happened since and I am now leaving for Budapest.

My last dispatch called recent legislation constructive. I still think so. The danger lies in the ambiguity of the escape clauses for embittered doctrinaire administrators. Take, for instance, the law concerning the right to vote. Article 4 disfranchises leading members of war-time Fascist organisations, but "also any individuals who associated themselves with such work." Peoples' Committees are empowered to draw up voting lists. Thirteen deputies, including the Croat Moderate and ex-Foreign Minister, Subasic, have already filed a protest to Parliament about the way these Committees are operating in Zagreb. In Belgrade recently, a ward committee moved to strike a man off the register because he sold an overcoat in the black market for food and another because he was once arrested (and released) by O.Z.N.A. Conversely, a woman who stole a kilo of sugar was reinstated because her daughter, aged fifteen, had informed against schoolmates who had been scribbling anti-Tito slogans on the walls. None of these decisions are final since they are pending confirmation by a higher committee, but the tendency is obvious.

Article 1 of the press law guarantees press freedom, but eighteen other articles proceed to restrict it. Article 6 excludes anyone ever connected with Fascist or pro-Fascist writings. The loose application of these adjectives in the Balkans is notorious. Article 2 authorises suspension for "spreading false and alarming rumours, endangering the State"—an obviously potent threat. It is also worth noting that the Government controls the distribution of paper and almost all printing machinery. There are more than a hundred pro-Government journals in Yugoslavia and only one Opposition paper. One could go on finding flaws in all the other laws. The guarantee of the right of association prohibits political parties which "are Fascist or spread discord," but it fails to give any definition. The law for the election of deputies allows parties outside the all-powerful People's Front to organise on a national scale, but it does not provide the freedom of travel necessary for building a national organisation.

Although this indictment is beginning to verge upon a diatribe, it is not intended to impugn the greatness of the Partisans' struggle, or the merits of its leaders, some of whom are of giant stature. As Kasanovitch said to Parliament, explaining why his Independent Democratic Party remains in the People's Front, "if there had been no Front, and if the procrastination advocated by reaction had prevailed, we would be faced by unsolved Serbo-Croat, Serb-Bulgar, and Macedonian problems, and continuing civil war." The Partisans revived and consolidated the idea of Federal Yugoslavia. They have crushed the concept of Greater Serbia, while preserving Serbia's rightful place among the South Slav community. They have repressed chauvinism and preached the gospel of Balkan brotherhood. They have a healthy internal programme of reconstruction; land-reform and the building of roads, railways, factories; increasing production and relief for devastated areas; and aid for the sick, the hungry, and the old. They are young and burning with enthusiasm for their "people's democracy of the masses." And that is why they lack moderation and charity for honestly critical opinion. On paper they have liberalism enough. Tito has said, "It is impossible to work without making mistakes. Self-criticism must continue to be our main virtue because it is the only way to correct our mistakes." Vice-Premier Kardelj has called for "the widest initiative from the people from below and greater democratisation of the organs of government." But the "people" are at present a closed corporation and membership is arbitrarily barred to too many.

It is impossible to see into the minds of men, but I do not credit the accusation of many dubious patriots (who now crowd the doors of the correspondents here, speaking excellent English, French or German) that the Communists are greedy to retain and expand their personal power. It is true they have the power. Other parties have many posts and the semblance of power, but the Communists possess its reality because they hold the key positions. Subasic may be Foreign Minister, but a Communist is chief of his political department and another Communist is director of personnel. Of the "Big Five" of the inner Government, Tito, Kardelj and Pijade are avowed Communists; Rankovitch—the chief of O.Z.N.A.—has no label but fools nobody. For the Communists, loss of power under Balkan conditions might mean the loss of their heads. But what they really fear is the loss of the revolution. During the Occupation, 25,000 Communist Party members died, including 11 Central Committee men. Besides this, 50,000 members of the Federation of Communist Youth were killed. The Party has too big a stake in events to leave much room for tolerance.

The Opposition—tiny in Parliament, but potentially significant in the country—dreads the worst. Savko Dukanac, spokesman of the Democratic Party, put it neatly in speaking to Parliament: "The chief trouble with all your laws is that there is no confidence between us. You do not believe our criticism is well-intentioned and we do not believe your 'People's Authority' will administer the laws impartially."

One measure of hope is the extreme sensitivity of the regime to foreign opinion. Even small publicity given abroad to the resignation of the Vice-Premier Milan Grol brought denials of "Titotalitarianism," and a hasty recognition of the Opposition's right to speak its mind in Parliament. Where Pijade—speaking in the name of the Government—had threatened that the people would reject the decisions of the Constituent Assembly if it tampered with prescriptions set in advance by the Government, Kardelj now assures the country that the Assembly may draw up any constitution it pleases.

Allied intervention is anathema to Yugoslavia as a sovereign and Allied State. The Partisans will move towards a much more liberal democracy if they are spared further mention of this distressing subject.

HAL LEHRMAN

NIGHT STORM

Around the eaves a soul unchristened,
A perished child, complains.
The gabble-ratchet, said my mother
Her pagan people told each other,
Lost in the weeping rains.
Like me they must have lain and listened,
Since there were window-panes.

FRANCES CORNFORD

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Mrs. L. Price.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Obituary.—She was a firm believer in "votes for women," anti-vaccination, and Count Mattei's electro-homoeopathic globules.—*The Times.*

Butcher.—Young Man required for shop in provincial town; able to manufacture sausages; state religion.—Advt. in *Belfast News Letter.*

A Huddersfield dog bit a policeman and later died from an overdose of bromide.—*Bradford Telegraph and Argus.*

The argument that because Rugby Union and Rugby League men served together and died together they should be able to play together, is not quite applicable since the same argument might be advanced in times of so-called peace when minor warfare with consequent loss of life is not an infrequent occurrence on the North-West Frontier of India and in Palestine.—*Daily Telegraph.*

EXPENSIVE AIDS

ARTIFICIAL limbs, dentures, spectacles, hearing aids—all these appliances, heterogeneous as they may at first appear, have in common one purpose: to replace destroyed functions of the human body or to support impaired ones. One could speak of them as one single industry and many difficult economic and social problems connected with the manufacture and supply of surgical and medical appliances might be simplified if they could be dealt with on a common basis and co-ordinated to a common policy. Such policy is very much needed just at the present time, as some conditions prevailing in the aids industry are, from the point of view of the public interest, far from satisfactory.

There is no doubt that the technical progress in aids has been admirable. The making and fitting of artificial limbs has been brought within recent years to a high standard of efficiency. In the majority of cases of single leg amputation, for instance, the artificial limb not only permits employment in a wide range of occupations but enables the amputee to give full output and to compete on terms of equality with persons not so handicapped. The same is true of many other aids and appliances. But in a social sense the supply of these aids to the needy is defective. In other countries injured workers get, in general, a free supply of aids and appliances, and even a free repair and maintenance service. No such benefits exist under the British system of Workmen's Compensation. Many foreign countries grant the same benefit under their sickness insurance schemes; in Britain all depends on the financial resources of Approved Societies and their willingness to supply these medical additional benefits. Mostly the needy is asked to pay at least a part of the cost himself or to rely on the support of his employer.

The Tomlinson Report on Rehabilitation recommended that the matter of aids should find a place in post-war schemes of the Health Services, and the White Paper on the national health service has given sympathetic attention to the matter; yet, again, it is suggested that "in the case of the more expensive appliances" the patient himself should be called upon, if his financial resources permit, to contribute to the cost—either of the appliances initially ordered, or at least of repairs and replacements. But, alas, the high-class modern aids and appliances—as hearing aids, etc.—are always an expensive matter! Under such circumstances it becomes even more necessary to see that these aids are not unduly increased in price by commercial exploitation.

A recent White Paper on Artificial Limbs reveals the fact that the production of some of them is in the hands of one firm or concern only. The Committee responsible for the Report has been well aware of the dangers inherent in monopolist production, but asserts that all efforts are made by the Ministry of Pensions to "ensure that a satisfactory limb is supplied at a fair price." But what is a "fair" price? Another public committee stated lately that there is no strict measure by which to judge the "right" price. It would be of interest to learn on what calculations the optimism shown by the Report on Artificial Limbs has been based. And what is the position where monopolist or combined manufacturers of aids are not under a contractual arrangement with a department scrutinising costs and profits? As to hearing aids, which have also greatly improved, the Duke of Montrose, President of the National Institute for the Deaf, which is responsible for much improvement in the hearing aids supplies, said before the House of Lords that the distribution of these aids "is all left to salesmen who can make what they like out of pushing different aids all over the country," and that the price of them was "exorbitant." The National Institute stated in a booklet before this war that hospitals get hearing aids at a large discount, so that the prices they have to pay range from £1 to £14, whereas the public prices are nearly double; significantly the writer added: "The reduction is possible because a hearing aid clinic is to the makers a kind of agent." This statement reveals the enormous discounts the distributors of the aids put into their pockets, while, as a matter of fact, if the people would get them direct through a hospital or from the manufacturer the 100 per cent. additional charges could be saved.

We have here a case for drastic reform. Medical and surgical aids and appliances, whatever they are, could be well supplied without the services of a distributive trade which enormously enhances their cost to the public. Hospitals, rehabilitation and health centres could, as some already do, provide special departments where the patient would be supplied with the aid best fitted to his purpose at the cheapest price. A Government department, without undertaking the manufacture of these articles, would see to it that under its contracts the aids supplied would be efficient and as inexpensive as possible. In goods where, as with these, efficiency and comfort play a so much greater role than individual taste or fashionable appearance standardised articles would be fully justified. It would be desirable to institute immediately a committee, departmental or otherwise, to enquire into the cost and prices of aids of all kinds, including dentures and spectacles. We have had the most valuable Report on artificial limbs, and not less than three committees were formed by the Medical Research Council to go into the question of deafness, one of them dealing with aids. But all such committees deal with technical matters only and cautiously refrain from giving their views on the much more complex problems of the trade in these aids; it is not in their terms of reference. Manufacturers probably are glad that this is the case. But the public has a right to know more about the cost and the prices charged, the trade practices and monopolist arrangements in this group of industry, the proper administration of which must affect not less their health than their purses.

HERMANN LEVY

A PAGE OF HISTORY

IT was a hot Sunday afternoon as we drove through Bielefeld. The Humber truck jolted its way over roughly-filled holes and followed the tram-lines towards the outskirts. We swung off the main road by the *Musikhalle* and turned into a quiet side road. On one side was an open stretch of grass where some children were playing in the sun; on the other half a dozen villas, with long gardens stretching behind. A notice on the door read: "Out of bounds to all Allied troops." Pierre Maillaud and I stayed in the car; Kurt knocked on the door. Karl Severing, Reich Minister of the Interior under the Weimar Republic, and fifteen years ago one of the most respected of the German Social Democratic leaders, was at home. Now seventy, but looking ten years younger, short, slightly built, with a high forehead, keen eyes and white hair, he pulled his jacket on as he came in from the garden, where he had been digging.

Our first questions came a little awkwardly. What had happened to him under the Nazis? (For Severing was a man of courage who had never concealed his opposition to the Nazis, and he had held high office under the Republic as late as 1932.) Arrested on a trumped-up charge of stealing State money for his party's election funds, he had been released after a short time and allowed to return to Bielefeld. His demand for a trial had been refused, but old friends in the State Police (which he had controlled as Minister of the Interior) had given him the tip that trouble was brewing, and in October, 1933, he had disappeared, moving from address to address in Berlin. At Easter, 1934, he had returned to Bielefeld and had stayed there ever since, disturbed only by noisy gangs of the Hitler Youth who sometimes came to break his windows.

Did he know anything of the plot of July 20th, 1944, against Hitler? Yes. Wilhelm Leuschner, the former Trade Union leader, who had been in and out of concentration camps for years and paid with his life for his part in the conspiracy, had come to see him several times. He had given Leuschner advice on how to fill the posts in any new Government, and on how they should run the country if they managed to seize power. When the plot failed, thirty thousand people were arrested. Friends in the police warned him that his own name was on the list, but he had escaped arrest.

So we came to the question I had wanted to ask all the time. In July 1932 von Papen, as Reich Chancellor, evicted the Social Democratic Government of Prussia, of which Karl Severing, as Minister of the Interior, had been the leading figure. Papen's action in taking over the government of Prussia was in many ways the key to the liquidation of the Weimar Republic which followed, and the events of July 1932 form one of the most important pages in the history of modern Germany. "You must know, Herr Severing, that the way in which you and the other Social Democrats accepted your dismissal by von Papen in 1932 has come in for a good deal of criticism outside Germany? Do you still believe you acted rightly?" The old man nodded and sat for some time, with his hands in his lap, thinking before he replied. Then: "I have never been able to defend myself. I will tell you." We settled back to listen. This was the story:

> The April elections to the Prussian Diet in 1932 left the Coalition supporting the Weimar Republic in a minority. In consequence, Otto Braun's Government—the Prussian State Government—in which Severing was Minister of the Interior, resigned in May. But the Opposition—Nazis, Nationalists, and Communists—was unable to form a Government. So the old Government stayed in office, but in an intolerably weak position since they could be defeated at any time in the Diet.
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> Meanwhile von Papen, as Chancellor and head of the Reich Government, was preparing to suppress the Prussian Government and to bring it under the control of the Reich Government as part of his plan to smash the parties of the Left. On July 20th, 1932, he summoned Otto Braun and Severing to the Chancellery, ostensibly to discuss unemployment. In fact he presented them with an ultimatum. President Hindenburg (Papen announced) had signed an order appointing him Minister President of Prussia, which would in future be administered by a Reichskommissar.
>
> The two Social Democrats replied that the action proposed was unconstitutional—*ein blutiger Dilettante* was Severing's phrase for Papen—and that, despite Hindenburg's order, they would refuse to resign except under force. Anything else would have been an act of desertion. While the argument continued, an official left the room—as they learned later to telephone the War Department. A few minutes later Braun and Severing left for the Prussian State Ministry. A meeting of the Prussian Cabinet, hurriedly summoned, upheld their action and approved Severing's proposal to submit the constitutional issue to the Supreme Court, refusing in the meantime to resign.

Here we interrupted: "But what about armed resistance? Why did you not make use of the Prussian Police, an armed force of more than 60,000 men?" Karl Severing nodded again and continued:

> That criticism rests on an incomplete knowledge of the situation. For instance, I have seen it said that the Army was hesitating and would not have fought. On the contrary, the Army was under Schleicher's control and Schleicher was behind Papen. The same day General von Rundstedt was appointed to the command of the Third Military District in Berlin, and Rundstedt was quite prepared to use force if necessary. Papen was not bluffing. Remember that Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution gave the President the right to declare a state of emergency, in which case all forces—including the Police—were at once subject to military authority, in this case the authority of Rundstedt. And there can be little doubt that Hindenburg would have declared such an emergency, if Papen had asked him.

I believe none the less that if I had called on the Prussian Police to fight, many of them would have followed me. But the result could never have been in doubt. The Police were poorly armed. They had only one carbine among three men. That was scarcely enough with which to challenge the artillery and machine guns of the Army, commanded by a man as resolute as Rundstedt and supported, as they would have been, by the Nazi gangs and the Black Reichswehr. To talk of Communist support is nonsense, for the Communists had shown themselves as bitter enemies of the Social Democrats as the Nazis. The Police would have been shot down where they stood. Nor should we have had popular support—a fact which the critics consistently overlook. For the elections had already shown a majority against us in Prussia—the Nazis alone had won as many seats in the Diet as the Weimar coalition parties. For those reasons I refused to throw away lives senselessly in a hopeless fight and allowed myself to be turned out of office. However bitter it is to admit, I still believe I was right.

I have given Severing's account as I wrote it down at the time. I have made no attempt to collate it with the very different account which, for instance, Mowrer gives in the opening pages of *Germany Puts the Clock Back*. It seems to me, however, an important piece of evidence for the writing of that page of German history.

We went on to talk of the present situation in Germany. Severing drew on his experience as Reichskommissar in Westphalia and the Ruhr after the last war to argue the necessity of treating Germany as a single unit for economic purposes and of preventing the demarcation lines from hardening into permanent frontiers. Of the danger of Germany, and Europe, being divided into an Eastern and a Western sphere of influence he was very much aware. There was no need to argue that any attempt to play off Russia against the Western Powers, or *vice versa*, would be a short-sighted policy. If the Allies fail to agree, as Severing immediately pointed out, nobody stands to lose as much as the Germans, for whom it would mean disaster. Re-education he believed to be possible, but he insisted that it must be done by the Germans themselves, Allied propaganda being no substitute for freedom of discussion and a free press.

ALAN BULLOCK

RADIO NOTES

IBSEN'S greatest plays—and I should put *The Wild Duck* very near the top—are particularly difficult for English actors because the latter are, by temperament as well as by training, usually inept for the combination of naturalism and poetry of which these plays are so closely woven. It was for this reason, no doubt, that some of the best Ibsen performances imaginable were those we used to see in the Germany of the Weimar Republic. German acting, like German life, was not conspicuous for good taste; but it possessed, in a truly marvellous degree, the power of rising suddenly out of minute and perfect realism into a flame of rhetoric, and then dying down again, as swiftly, into the ordinary. A musical technique, I imagine, which we, as a nation, find less easy to achieve. Yet how necessary it is, not only to great acting, but even to the lower reaches of the art! All the crises of *The Wild Duck* (as of *Little Eyolf* and *Rosmersholm*) resemble those geometrical *trompe-l'œil* which seem at one moment to be coming out at you, at the next to recede. The actor must live simultaneously on two planes of feeling, and this is the highest test. I will not say that, by this standard, every moment of Howard Rose's production carried utter conviction to my mind; but, considered as a whole, this broadcast was a triumph for all concerned. And let us not forget that two-thirds of a remarkably fine cast belong to the Drama Repertory, who have to fritter away most of their days on cliché-ridden trifles. Give them an occasion to rise to, and they seldom fail to show how expert, how disciplined a team they are. It was clever of Howard Rose to have divined that the abominable self-conceit of Gregers Werle would be admirably rendered through the cricketer's voice of Cyril Gardiner; clever of him, too, to extract only what was wanted from Milton Rosmer and Belle Chrystall, and to suppress the rest. Mr. Rosmer, indeed, carried almost all his peaks, and so, it seemed to me, did Sybil Arundale who rose magnificently to the height of the confession scene—surely one of the most painful scenes in any play, since it shows the good heart of a stupid and rather common woman set at nought by the vacuous pretensions of wordy selfishness. Gregers's folly is criminal, whereas that of Hjalmar Ekdal is merely crass; but, of the two, I think we mind the latter more, because of the unkindness involved. Miss Arundale saw to it that we were not spared the burning of the coals of fire Ibsen here heaps upon all that is least attractive in the male character. Lance Sieveking's adaptation was so smooth and self-effacing that one soon ceased noticing how it was done and simply attended to the words—the all-important words, on the smallest inflections of which the producer had evidently bestowed the most anxious care. *The Wild Duck* must not be allowed to remain an exceptional case—like a spoonful of caviare in a canteen. If the Drama Department can do this, they must be encouraged to do it more often. Many masterpieces await them.

Lieutenant Jaras of the Polish Army showed the B.B.C., in a remarkably quiet way, how to address its audience. "You find foreigners irritating. So are you when you are abroad," he told us; adding: "You are not more anxious to get rid of us than we are to go." That, I submit, is the stuff to give us; and it was done with such civility of utterance that no sensible person could have been offended. Producers of Forces Educational Broadcasts would do well to take a leaf out of Lt. Jaras's book. But of this, more next week.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—*September 16th.* "The Marriage of St. Francis" (3.45); "Lorna Doone" (8.30); Text and Context—Arthur Hugh Clough (11.3).

September 17th. Music from Sweden (L.P. 6.15); Book Talk by Henry Reed (6.45); Radar (7.0).

September 19th. Beecham Concert (7.30); How to make Friends (Stephen Potter and Joyce Grenfell, 9.45); Bach (11.3). Cabaret from Paris (L.P. 10.10).

September 20th. Concert (2.0); Sibelius 2nd Symphony (7.10); Itma (8.30).

September 21st. Forces Educational Broadcasts, "Modern Music" (L.P. 10.40 a.m.) and "War against the Tsetse Fly" (L.P. 3.0); London Chamber Orchestra (7.0 p.m.).

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Getting Married," at the Arts Theatre

Most of those who have seen this play already will set their standards by the series of revivals that began with the 1925 production at the Kingsway. They will miss the Hotchkiss of Esme Percy, who was always able to suggest the sanity which is one of the exuberant offshoots of the madness in Shaw's Jack Tanner parts. The Bishop (Mr. Mark Dignam) and Father Anthony (Mr. Marcus Insley) perfectly interpreted the author's description of their characters. But this must be one of the most fiendishly difficult to act of all Shaw's plays. Farcical speeches are delivered in answer to lines spoken in the different dimension of comedy. The Acts are segments of a continuous conversation and are related to each other no more organically than are adjacent slices of a cake. For action, Shaw depends, in his plays of this kind, on Entrances. And even if the new character appears covered with medals, or dressed as a beadle or an Arab chief, it is difficult for a clothing coupon age to make these interludes sufficiently gorgeous. Yet the wit holds even if, to use one of Shaw's favourite words, we are no longer "scandalised." And many wise and true things are said about marriage, even if those two important elements in the question, love and the lusts of the flesh, have no place in this twilight world of flirtation.

Pictures from the Tate at the National Gallery

It is lamentable that even this select anthology of pictures from the damaged Tate Gallery can find no shelter more commodious and better lighted than the basement of the National Gallery. But how delightful to see again, even though one sees them ill, a number of dear friends, ranging from *Marriage à la Mode* to the Braque Still Life. Also what amounts to a new friend, for the cleaning of the Gainsborough *Sunset Landscape* has revealed delicate suffusions of colour. No 20th century English pictures are on show, which must disappoint the curiosity of many Americans who still come to London, and of other visitors such as M. Molotov. Perhaps they will be consoled by a roomful of Pre-Raphaelites: the Dyce, for instance, is calculated to stagger the most sophisticated of foreigners. A group of Turners excites particular pleasure. In the Tate the less conscientious spectators were tempted to neglect the Turners, just because there were so many of them, making the artist seem long-winded. The selection now on view should revive even in the most jaded eyes a response to this miraculous brush.

THE MOVIES

"Marie-Louise," at the Academy
"Uncle Harry," at Leicester Square Theatre
"Captain Eddie," at the Odeon
"This was Japan," M.o.I.

By the end of the war, the face of Nazi Europe was pretty familiar. News-reels and Hollywood between them had skimmed every shot and situation. But the reportage was too fleeting and the fiction often superficial. We hardly ever got a glimpse of what it was like to *live* on the other side of the Channel. Now a tender, unpretentious film comes from Zurich. *Marie-Louise* is the story of a young French girl, evacuated from Rouen to Switzerland for rest and recuperation. A Swiss family takes her to its heart; she dreads returning to Rouen and the Fortress raids. Frightened by low-flying aircraft she collapses. Workers in a textile factory, realising from her state the condition of children in occupied France, work overtime to pay the upkeep of a mountain hostel for a party of French youngsters. The film takes its time but is never boring. Josiane, who plays the child, is herself a young refugee in Switzerland. Her performance—and that of the adults—make *Marie-Louise* a most charming and sensitive film. The escaping pilots and the Allied secret agents have had their celluloid tributes; but it was left to a small Swiss studio to make a fine film about children in the war.

Uncle Harry was so good a play that even its translation into cinema cannot really spoil it. The bones of the Thomas Job story are kept. The two sisters still dominate their brother; his romance with The Girl is still disrupted by Lettie's jealousy; the dog poison is still given to Harriet by mistake. But the edge is gone. The tension diminishes instead of reaching a terrible climax on the eve of Lettie's execution. George Sanders is too Saint-like to be a convincing Uncle Harry, though, true, he dabbles in astronomy and plays the piano for the glee-singers. By the end, you almost expect the cheap trick ending which ruins the point of the play. All the same, it's good entertainment if you missed the stage production.

Yet another of the flashback biographies. This time it is Eddie Rickenbacker drifting around the Pacific in a rubber dinghy, though the story follows the *Edison* pattern. The boy who loved machines; the first aircraft; he makes good in automobiles; he races, he crashes; he becomes America's Public Hero. And, of course, there is Lynn Bari, the Wife Who Waits. Rickenbacker's life reads like a movie and 20th Century Fox producers like that kind of story on a plate. If, after *Lifeboat* and *Western Approaches*, you have had enough of men in dinghies, don't worry; they are always picked up. Fred MacMurray looks positively pleased as he paddles off the screen.

Since nobody made news-reels when Commodore Perry landed in Japan, the M.o.I. now give us shots of Fujiyama and Japanese physical culture with a commentary-digest on Japanese social history. This one-reeler makes its point quite effectively. But it is time somebody used the cinema to tell us a good deal more about the Japanese. Most people just don't know the difference between Gilbert and Shinto.

NORMAN MACKENZIE

Correspondence

LABOUR POLICY

SIR,—I think that Major Wyatt's letter effectively presses the feeling of disquiet and perhaps frustran experienced by many of the new and young bour M.P.s. After the first flush of great electoral tory had worn off this was probably inevitable. It certainly not decreased by the large volume of ters we are receiving, calling for rapid and decisiye ion. The people are taking much more interest the doings of "our Government" than of any evious Government, and obviously and rightly this ll continue, because they took a great deal of trouble get this Government elected, much to everyone's nishment, and they look to it as a people's Governnt to get things done.

What is the trouble? We fought the election on programme of *Let us face the future* and the ng's Speech promised us the public ownership of Bank of England, nationalisation of the mines, and establishment of a National Health Service. So , so good. But the people want the answers on a ndred and one particular problems, of demobbing l houses, pensions and post-war credits, and so on. is to be hoped that the Committee system of the rliamentary Labour Party gets going as soon as ssible, so that we may get the answers quickly and press to the Ministers the feeling of the country. t meantime, notwithstanding our impatience, let recognise that the King's Speech is not a "kind alternative Coalition" policy. It is Socialist policy. I do agree with Major Wyatt that the chief someng-that-is-lacking-somewhere is information and blicity. People want to know the reasons why and y not. They don't want to explore any more enues, and they don't see why all the relevant facts l statistics cannot be given and the position stated ntly.

This is the essence of the demobilisation conversy. Why cannot we have the full facts about the cupation forces required, the transport position, numbers in each group, the munitions that are ll being made, the units that are idle? More harm l heartburning are caused by the continuance of culation and press "forecasting" than could ssibly be caused by a publication of all the facts. is is what the men in the Services are concerned out, as can be read, for example, in the columns *Union Jack* of C.M.F. And all the more so because y support the principle for which the Government standing out, namely, that each man shall be mobbed according to his age-plus-length-of-service, whether serving at home or overseas. The Government is entirely right, for to relax that principle by letting out the men at home or near home simply because there appears to be nothing for them to do would lead to all kinds of anomalies, wire-pulling, and eventually chaos, and would be a serious injustice to the men overseas, particularly in far-away stations. Let us stand by that principle of the Bevin Plan—but does that really mean condemning thousands of men to "futile fatigues"? Have not the Service Departments prepared tremendous schemes of educational training, and is there any reason why men in uniform shouldn't help with the harvest, demolition, and clearing sites for houses? Here is some room for boldness and imagination.

What we don't want to see at any price is cautiousness, the line of least resistance, and administrative convenience, hereditary diseases of Continental Social Democracy. On matters of home and foreign policy, the country expects and awaits something drastic to meet the situation. That's why they put us in power.

House of Commons. STEPHEN SWINGLER

A PRECEDENT FOR MR. BEVAN.

SIR,—One of the problems which Mr. Bevan must solve is the problem of rationalising the production of the houses which he decides to build. Into the job of manufacturing parts and fittings, and getting them to site at the right time and in the right quantities, will have to go all the available industrial potential of the country. It means using, not only the big firms, but also thousands of little ones, with a great many that have never taken part in a building programme before. How is it to be done?

There is, I believe, a prototype of the best machine for this purpose already in existence. It is called "Fairmile."

Early in the war the Admiralty decided it wanted some 70ft. coastal craft. Most of the big yards were already overloaded. The only untapped capacity was among the boat builders on the Thames, in the Hamble River and in the estuaries round our coast. These were makers of rowing boats, dinghies, etc.: little people for the most part. The problem was how to use them. This was where "Fairmile" came in. The idea was to create a Company to operate the principle the Railton car people had used. "Fairmile" was to be the administrative head office, the quantity surveyor as it were, to which would be given by the Admiralty the bare general arrangement drawing and the number off of the types which they required. "Fairmile" then made the detail drawings and broke down the assembly into its component parts. The total of every part required for the contract was calculated. The orders for all the items were then placed with outside suppliers at prices negotiated with the individual manufacturers direct. All the pieces of the jig-saw which were to comprise the boats were collected and stored in depots round the country, and each part was labelled.

"Fairmile" didn't make anything at all itself. Thus it could rationalise production down to the last nail, it could happily show the supplier the general arrangement drawing as well as the detail one (immense wastage often occurs when this is not done) and it could freely discuss production techniques and negotiate prices without restraint on either side, for it was not in competition.

The final job of assembling the boats was very simple. Whenever a boat builder was ready to lay a keel "Fairmile" would deliver to his yard all the parts of the jig-saw. The builder would merely put them together. He hardly required to be able to read a blue print. As a boat became ready for launching a "Fairmile" man would come along and supervise the trials. The boat builder had nothing to worry about except building the boat; he didn't have to order a thing; he made practically no scrap and his price was his labour plus overheads, which is easy to check.

The interest in "Fairmiles" is that it is a Government-department which looks like a private firm. It combines the absence of the profit motive with an entire absence of red tape. It does this, I think, because it is staffed by people who have never been civil servants, because its offices are far enough from Whitehall to avoid contagion, and, most important of all, it is not grafted on to a private concern, as the shadow factories are.

I believe that the "Fairmile" system can very simply be adapted to get the houses which we now require. There is a world of difference between "Fairmile" and an ordinary government department. In housing that difference may well be the difference between success and failure. It is my answer to the question: Can Socialism avoid bureaucracy?

HENRY USBORNE, A.M.I.M.E.

House of Commons.

INDIAN PRISONS

SIR,—The controversy on Indian Prison conditions in your Correspondence columns tempts me to quote a statement by the Home Secretary to the Government of India on August 5th, 1943. *The Hindustan Times* of Delhi had editorially commented on July 11th on the use of four underground cells in Delhi's Red Fort, "built on the bed of a dried-up well and reached by about seventy steps below surface level. Here the sun's rays don't penetrate, and the damp and impure

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JONATHAN CAPE

air make the place uninhabitable. The cells are so dark (since the only open side is the one which faces the steps) that it is hardly possible to see anything even in daytime." A member of the Council of State asked a question on the subject and got the official reply of the Home Secretary (the Hon. Mr. Conran-Smith) that "the floor of the cells is about 16 feet below ground level, but in front of the cells is a space open to the sky, at least 23 feet wide. Since the cells do not receive the direct rays of the sun, they are somewhat dark; but they are of good size and sanitary, and are quite suitable for detention for short periods of persons who are under interrogation. And it is for that purpose alone that they are used." (See Council of State Debates, August 11th, 1943.)

"Short periods," Mr. Conran-Smith said later, in answer to supplementary questions, meant "not more than one month without the Chief Commissioner's special permission," and "in no case more than two months." He added that the cells had been used in only two cases. That, I am certain, is not true. I have had first-hand reports of confinement in these cells from at least two other men, one of them a brilliant writer on the staff of a leading Indian paper. He spent several weeks in such a cell, and the other 17 days. Mr. Conran-Smith explained that these cells were "reasonably suitable for the purposes of interrogation."

I quote this instance in view of the official admission, however qualified. Many other reports reached me from men, released after detention for "interrogation," of treatment which can only be termed brutal. It was useless and dangerous to complain, because these men had to be protected from further police attention.

Why did the late Governor of Behar (Sir Thomas Stewart) send a circular letter to all District Magistrates, towards the end of 1942, begging them to take note of complaints against police officials who had, under cover of restoring law and order, resorted to oppression and loot? He was plainly disturbed by evidence which was reaching him from unofficial sources.

B. SHIVA RAO

2/3 Salisbury Court,
Fleet Street, London, E.C.4.

THE YOGI AND THE COMMISSAR

SIR,—At Mr. D. N. Pritt's invitation, I visited the office of the Society for Cultural Relations and studied carefully the documents that he wanted me to see. I could reach no conclusion, however, because the Decree (or Decision) of April 5th, 1935, stands in point-blank contradiction to Article 22 of the Penal Code, which exempts children from the death penalty. The Decree states that children from the age of 12 upwards who are found thieving, using violence, etc., shall be liable to *all* the punishments of the Code; and the maximum penalty for robbery, banditry, the use of violence, etc., is execution (Article 193.28). I accept your assurance that a thoroughly trustworthy lawyer is certain that Article 22 overrides the Decree. An assurance that I have been mistaken has never given me greater pleasure. Nevertheless, the Decree is unquestionably very harsh towards children who commit certain offences, and this remains true when due recognition is given to the points raised by Mr. Karl Polanyi.

Burnt Oak, Kidlington, Nr. Oxford. JOHN R. BAKER

HARD-FACED MEN

SIR,—I see that you have revived in "Week-end Competitions" my often-quoted quotation about "the hard-faced men" after the Election of 1918. But, as the original context shows, it was not my own but taken from "a Conservative friend"—in fact, Lord Baldwin. I vividly recall the occasion. I was having tea with Lord Chalmers in his room in Old Treasury Chambers which adjoined the room where the Financial Secretary used to sit. Mr. Baldwin (as he then was), just back from the first day of the new House, half opened the door; "What do they look like?" I asked him; and out came the famous phrase.

If Pink Flower wants to give a prize for a phrase thrown out on this occasion, he must not expect an exact correspondence of form. I should give it to a remark quoted by "Peterborough" in the *Daily Telegraph* from one of the new Members. If I remember right, it ran "When I arrived my feeling was one of amazement how on earth I had got there; at the end of the week, of amazement how the others had got there."

It is, by the way, a very good means of getting undeserved credit not to give your references. Without naming the author, I concluded *The Economic Consequences* with ten or a dozen most apt lines from Shelley's *Prometheus* which led, I soon discovered, to a general belief that I had written them myself. I also included, without acknowledgment, in an article cabled to America, twenty lines of *Samson Agonistes*, which appeared (and were paid for at so much a word) as my own, though my glory was a little dimmed by their being printed as prose.

S/S Pasteur. KEYNES

ALIENS

SIR,—May I be allowed to raise a matter which I consider sufficiently urgent as to warrant inclusion in your correspondence column.

I would like to draw your attention to the unwillingness of the Department concerned, to grant naturalisation papers to aliens (especially the class known technically as "enemy-aliens") who have served loyally in practically every branch of H.M. Forces for some for five years or more, others for less; some have made the supreme sacrifice—they laid down their lives for the country which granted them refuge, in a fight against fascism. They did not ask for gratitude, but I think I am right in saying—though I can only speak for myself—the remaining survivors also ask not for gratitude, but for justice.

I received a negative reply from the Home Office last week to a similar plea. As a Socialist, I did not expect any understanding from a Tory Home Secretary, but surely one could expect a Labour Government to have learned from events of the last 10 years and to recognise its friends and not to repeat the crowning folly, leading to disaster, perpetuated by British reactionaries since 1933 (some even before Hitler's *Machtantritt*) of antagonising most, if not all, progressive elements in Europe and elsewhere, and of turning loyalty into despairing bitterness? How can our comrades all over the world again died in vain?

As a man without a passport or country does not exist officially (*vide* Displaced Persons) could you not allow those people, who have proved themselves to be loyal without any doubt and who served in the Forces (later to others, too) an official existence following American Army example? What do readers think about it?

P. H.

FAMILY ALLOWANCES

SIR,—In your editorial comment on the Family Allowance Act in the issue of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of September 8th, you pointed out that the Act limits family allowances to children of a family who is a British subject "born in the United Kingdom," therefore it excludes children of a father who is a naturalised British subject, and pays the same taxes as a father born in the United Kingdom.

May I point out that it also discriminates against children of a father born in a British Dominion or Colony, who may become resident in and a taxpayer in the United Kingdom. There is equally no reason why they should be discriminated against.

C. W. W. GREENIDGE

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

HEN the Nonesuch edition of Charles Dickens's ers was published in 1938, a thorough recon- ration of the novelist's life became necessary. ere was an opportunity to fill in the gaps ch Forster left, especially in the last fifteen rs of his subject's life; and it became possible heck the disparaging studies of the debunking od of biography in the '20s, when Dickens fair game for the anti-Victorians. One or contemporary books on Dickens would ily be supplanted. Mr. Osbert Sitwell's eye style and dramatic stance caught the lasting lity of Dickens's histrionic gift—one remem- Mrs. Veneering, with a face like the face of cking horse; Mr. George Orwell was shrewd; of all there was Mr. Humphrey House's mination of the background to Dickens's vity as a reformer, a scholarly book which blished his period more clearly than any I w. Most original and disputable, there were Edmund Wilson's researches into the neurotic ins of Dickens's quite extraordinary taste for ence. The biographer who neglected these later books with their sense of the pressure on Dickens from without and from within, in danger of leaving us with nothing but the r's figure, liquid, elusive and isolated in the light.

low the new biography has appeared.* Dame Pope-Hennessy has undertaken the labour ch the Nonesuch letters indicated. A long, ked, detailed book has been written. Regret- one must turn down the claims of its read- ity, its shrewdness and ironical sympathy: as ajor piece of biography it is a failure. Often e, generally meandering, and written in an perating mood of chirruping equanimity, new *Life* is an accumulation of material, a ting sea of facts in which the vague face of kens is seen putting up a helpless fight against information that washes him hither and her. The acuteness and intelligence of the hor are wasted on a book without a scheme, out those pauses for judgment at important es which are essential to works of biography. resting assertions about Dickens are made time to time—for example, he is said to be prototype of the classless men we see about o-day—but none of these assertions is argued. s particular one, vague though it is, would ery hard to prove. Then the effort to create osphere lands the author in comical passages this one about Dickens's wedding:—

> A faintly literary flavour might have been im- rted to the occasion had they been married by e rector, Mr. Kingsley (father of Charles), but was the curate who made them man and wife.

The "who-would-have-guessed?" voice prattles and achieves wonders of irrelevance:—

> Another boy, Robert Browning (just Charles's e), was also living south of the Thames at this me, imbibing a different set of experiences in a rden in Camberwell.
>
> ven north of the Thames experience was being ibed: at Chiswick there was young Thackeray. et Charles, despite his disadvantages, was in long run to outdistance them."

A breezy success story seems to be proposed the biographer, who, later on, is to talk of kens "going off the rails with an actress"; who adds, in the arch voice of the vicarage ip, that "it is to be supposed" that Dickens *ght* he was getting what he wanted, and soon d out that in fact he was not. As it now ears that the liaison with Miss Ternan may lasted twelve years, this conventional pancy sounds not merely vulgar but short- ted. Then, with startling sang-froid, the rapher pads her narrative with detailed ppses of the plots of the chief novels; for t reason it is hard to imagine, for if one has read these novels a summary of the plot two three pages long would leave one none the r. Quotation would have been valuable—there are one or two admirable quotations from *Edwin Drood* and *Our Mutual Friend*—criticism even better.

The occasion demanded altogether better handling; nevertheless out of such a mass of material there is a good deal that is fascinating and will be new to many readers. One is interested to hear that Dickens (the dandy) was deeply depressed by the sight of Scott's old clothes preserved at Abbotsford. One is astonished to hear of Carlyle, Emerson and Dickens discussing the incontinence of the English. Dickens shocked both his guests by his Continental views on male chastity; they come indeed oddly from the creator of Steerforth. In the larger outline of her portrait, Dame Una Pope-Hennessy rightly makes a great deal of one characteristic of Dickens which the more searching kind of writer has been apt to miss: his magnetic, indeed hypnotic, personal charm, his fabulous vivacity. Modelling himself on D'Orsay, whom he would gaze at entranced, Dickens was a mixture of dandy and angel in his youth; not until he was in his forties did he acquire the Svengali-look of the conjurer, spell-binder and hypnotist, which comes into the pictures of Dickens reading. But at 25 he looked like the wilful and successful cherub of Samuel Laurence's drawing; in America the public were astonished by his exquisite, frail appearance and his air of extreme youth. The youthfulness quickly went. By the time he was 28 Dickens had all the appearance of a middle-aged man. One of the compelling things about Dickens must have been his gift of success. He worked hard at regular hours and, after work, he was inexhaustibly gregarious and gay. His life seems like one succession of family parties, amateur theatricals, routs, soirées with Dickens the life and soul of the occasion. The reports that survive of these occasions do not suggest, it must be confessed, that they were anything very brilliant. Rarely as one would hope to side with the opinion of Mrs. Carlyle, one is bound to feel some sympathy with her mixed impression of a typical party. There were games, there was romping, there was conjuring:

> After champagne supper crackers were pulled, toasts given and country dances romped through. Everyone, including Thackeray, Maclise and Jerdan, "capered like mænads." Dickens failed to induce Mrs. Carlyle to waltz with him, but Forster seized her by the waist and whirled her round the room. "For the love of heaven let me go!" she cried. "You are going to bash my brains against the folding doors." Whereupon Forster bellowed, "Your brains? Who cares about brains here?" "The thing," according to Mrs. Carlyle, "was rising into something not unlike the 'Rape of the Sabines,' when suddenly someone shouted, 'Twelve o'clock!' and all the guests rushed to the cloak-room."

One sees Dickens in all his activities as a stupendous first person singular, an egotist imposing his imagination upon everyone and everything, as fluid as an actor. Everything is on the surface; exhausted, he becomes irritable, suspicious, remorseful, incredibly touchy—he intrigued to stop the publication of parodies of his work—as he grew older, vivacity turned to unheeding frenzy. One important point this biography makes clear is his continuous anxiety about money. He spent lavishly on dull and often pretentious things—never was a friend of the poor so determined to get rich—and the costly social life of the Dickens seems to indicate that he had no idea of what to do with his money, beyond the taking of larger establishments and providing expensive family romps. Very early in his twenties he earned the equivalent of a modern £4,000 a year, with no income tax to pay on it; yet he is continually apprehensive about money, and always ready to accuse a publisher of robbing him. No doubt the insecurity of his childhood and the dreadful, ludicrous ghost of his impecunious and hopelessly self-satisfied father, nagged at Dickens and drove him to ruthlessness. But there can also be no doubt that he shared the middle-class money-standard of success. His groans—after all the uplift about the story—when he made only £500 out of *A Christmas Carol* are quite shocking. One is inclined to think that the picture of the Veneerings in *Our Mutual Friend* has a good deal in common with Dickens's own life. Yet his obsession with money is a mere anxiety. Dickens, we may be sure, slaved to pay off his debts at once, but he understood money a good deal less than Balzac, who was sunk in debts all his life. Old Nickleby, Scrooge, Skimpole and Micawber are emotions—frights and jeers—about money; they are possible attitudes. Dickens never knew how money organises and stratifies life, which Balzac knew very well. The only general idea about money that Dickens grasped was the breathless, dramatic contrast between wealth and poverty; and this he understood better than any other Victorian novelist, for he had stood on the brink of the abyss—which is perhaps more terrifying than the abyss itself. Though it is perhaps impossible to imagine a more frightful place on earth than Bethnal Green in 1840.

A good deal is rightly made by Dame Una Pope-Hennessy of Dickens as a reformer, and especially of the trouble he took to discover new material. He visited the Lancashire mills. Mr. Wackford Squeers was produced by special investigation. He was not a memory of childhood, but a reporter's discovery. The value of Dickens's public interests as a novelist was that they forced him to move about. In one sense his novels are newspapers. They have the ephemeral, emotional over-emphasis of the newspaper, the rough-and-ready editorial shaping; so many columns of indignation, so many of melodrama, so many of comedy, so many of sentiment. Dickens worked out a special formula for his serials. On the whole the contemporaries of Dickens divided, as we do, about his reformist work and his stories in general. Bagehot, the Liberal Tory, was really shocked by the Radicalism of Dickens. Tennyson complained of his twaddle. But in general the division of opinion on Dickens was not a class division; though, on the whole, he did not appeal to the educated. The maddening thing was that he caricatured the educated. They are the only real caricatures in his novels. For the famous "characters" of Dickens are not, I believe, caricatures at all. They are not fantasies or exaggerations either. They are extracts or summaries of people, a curious blend of the external and internal man, and they especially contain that quality of private day-dream and inner soliloquy which (French critics tells us) is a very marked feature of the English character—the feature called our "madness." In our day-dreams we are actors, and Dickens, the actor, seized the actor in every man and woman and child at once. (What an act is put on even by Paul Dombey and Little Nell!) I incline to the opinion that here is Dickens's most important contribution to the English novel; he added what one may call a character's view of himself or herself. His dialogue, again and again, is a collection of disparate reiterated soliloquies or stage asides to the audience. The present biographer makes two happy quotations from Mr. Podsnap, which to some extent illustrate this point:

> Mr. Podsnap was well-to-do and stood very high in Mr. Podsnap's opinion. Beginning with a good inheritance he had married a good inheritance, and had thriven exceedingly in the Marine Insurance way, and was quite satisfied. He never could make out why everybody was not quite satisfied, and he felt conscious that he set a brilliant social example in being particularly well satisfied with most things and, above all other things, himself.

The trick of repetition often fails; it drops easily into the cheaper manner of his sketch books; but in the main it exploited the inner hum and emphasis of one's day-dream about oneself. He caught the stream of comic consciousness; and the loud throb of the first person singular, which gets louder, harder, bolder until, in the end, it becomes something like a theatrical death knell.

The qualities and vices of Dickens are indivisible; his melodrama grows naturally out of his comedy—it is simply a different kind of emphasis.

Charles Dickens, 1812–1870. By Una Pope-nessy. *Chatto & Windus*. 21s.

He is dominated by a sense of the double life of people. His sentiment is the point of rest between. And like his novels, the life of Dickens is a perpetual serial, streaming out in fevered monthly numbers; a day-dream life against which it is the duty of the biographer to oppose the not always flattering reality. And upon which it is necessary to impose a greater sense of order and proportion than Dame Una Pope-Hennessy has been equipped to do. V. S. PRITCHETT

A RHAPSODIST OF EMPIRE

Imperial Commonwealth. By LORD ELTON. *Collins.* 21s.

After long prayer and consultation of the Scriptures, the early settlers of 17th century Connecticut assembled to discuss the annexation of further Red Indian territory. They disposed of this item on their agenda by passing three resolutions: (1) that the earth is the Lord's (agreed *nem. con.*); (2) that the Lord can give the earth to his saints (agreed *nem. con.*); (3) that we are his saints (agreed *nem. con.*). Lord Elton does not record this episode in his full-length portrait of the British Empire; but throughout its 500-odd pages his narrative continuously illustrates the same psychological mechanism of *hierosis*—the making holy of one's emotional preferences, the inventing of sacred sanction and endorsement for one's crude sentiments and interests. The practical advantages of the mechanism are obvious. It convinces those who use it that they are successfully raising their private feelings above the subjective and relative level, even when from a detached scientific standpoint it is impossible to prove any objective reference for them.

Lord Elton argues thus:—The British Empire has shown a unique tenacity of life, persistently surviving while other imperial structures collapse. This survival has been *earned*. "There could have been no Empire if those who laid its foundations had not possessed some quality of absolute value, some virtue of which the world stood in need." Fitness to survive has little to do with the jockeying of power politics or with expedient adjustment to changing situations. It is an ethical affair. Human groups earn survival when their conduct conforms to the moral law of the universe, by which (to cut a long story short) virtue is rewarded and vice punished. The mere existence of the British Empire is therefore proof of its moral excellence. If it had been unworthy, it would have perished along with so many of its one-time rivals.

In this way Lord Elton's life-story of the Empire is enriched by a general theory of political development. Empire history is presented as the God-guided unfolding of God-approved latency. "The Empire is the embodiment of a missionary idea . . . the acknowledgment of an obligation." This idea, this obligation, is "the spreading of free institutions, in place of despotism, into every continent of the world . . . the spreading of freedom through Parliamentary self-government." It is, he thinks, a mistake to suppose that the material well-being of its inhabitants is part of the Empire's *raison d'être*. On the contrary, "in prosperity men forget their true selves." "The history of mankind is but a record of brief interludes of prosperity punctuated by the catastrophes to which the prosperity itself gave rise." Broadly speaking, welfare flashes the red light of danger. It is, or soon becomes, self-indulgence and materialism, which "have in due course to be expiated in suffering and failure."

Lord Elton cannot fancy materialism. The only good word he has to say for it is as a substitute for political freedom in the dark-skinned dependencies. "Certainly many of the backward peoples of the Empire need prosperity more than self-government." What expiation they would have to make for it later on he does not specify.

As a hierosis-addict, whose views feel as though they bear the superscription of the universe, Lord Elton gives a rough handling to such as put a different interpretation on events. A hostile critic might be tempted to say that he begins with cant, goes on to scorn, and finishes in *hubris*. A friendly one would admit that the range of his contempt is wide. It seems indeed that there are two things which Lord Elton, for all his versatility, cannot do. One is to face squarely any humiliating truth about the group with which he has identified himself; the other is to allow that men of other nations may serve humanity as well and as honestly as the British. This emotional immaturity weakens not merely his approach to history, but the very rhetoric with which he pleads his cause.

His treatment, for example, of the slave trade, the Indian mutiny, and the Amritsar massacre of 1919 is full of embarrassed casuistry, because he is determined to free the British from ultimate blame. In a similar spirit he represents Dupleix as simply out for power, wealth, and the spread of despotism, the invidious contrast with Clive, the high-souled patriot who helped "to lay the moral foundations of dominion over dependent races." Spaniards, Dutch, and Germans are even more brusquely written off than the French.

Of a piece with these attitudes is Lord Elton's want of sympathy with the Empire's native populations. In fact he seldom mentions them. But he spares a sneer for the Church Missionary Society because in New Zealand in the 1830s it was concerned more with the future of the Maoris than with opportunities for British settlers. And he has a passage about the customs and traditions of Hinduism which appears to be as insulting as he can make it. His outlook here is governed in part by emotional transfer from his hatred of the Indian National Congress.

The cream of the disdain in this disdainful book is, however, reserved for "the intellectuals." Lord Elton is anti-intellectual in two senses. He considers that instinct and emotion are better guides to action than taking thought and testing it by aiming at a target. Those who seek the provident correction of man's estate merely, he thinks, "follow darkness like a dream." Moreover, intellectuals (woe betide them) tend to exile imperial pride, together with the military virtues, "to the shades of popular disfavour." Worst crime of all, they are often internationalists.

LEONARD BARNES

PICTURE BOOKS

French Painting. With an introduction by T. S. EARP. *Avalon Press.* 8s.

English Painting. With an introduction by WILLIAM GAUNT. *Avalon Press.* 8s.

Augustus John. With an introduction by JOHN ROTHENSTEIN. *Phaidon Press.* 20s.

Wilson Steer. With an introduction by ROBIN IRONSIDE. *Phaidon Press.* 20s.

Renoirs's Les Parapluies. By CLIVE BELL. *Lund Humphries.* 4s. 6d.

Titian's Europa. By STUART PRESTON. *Lund Humphries.* 4s. 6d.

The first two books in the above list must be judged as primers. For some reason the editors have chosen to anthologise (with few exceptions) the most easily available, not to say the most hackneyed pictures. And both volumes suffer from the same serious defect: they begin too late. There may be some justification for excluding the mediæval painters of walls and Books of Hours, but it seems to me misleading to reproduce no sixteenth-century portraits from either France or England. Mr. Earp's introduction is exemplary; in his concise history of French painting he has managed to pack a number of illuminating remarks. (Note, for instance, his paragraph on Corot.) Mr. Gaunt's introduction is more vulnerable. Both authors offer an account of Constable's influence on Delacroix, but I think Mr. Earp's is the more accurate; and is it sensible in Mr. Gaunt to compare Hogarth's genius with Shakespeare's?

Looking through the illustrations in these two books I am struck once more by the evil star has presided over English painting. To b with, almost all our mediæval wall-paintings been destroyed—and the Chichester Ro suggests how serious this loss may be. The forward the history of English painting re an almost unbroken series of disappointm Hilliard had an exquisite gift, but the imp tion of dazzling foreigners killed, for some re instead of stimulating the growth of a n school. So much so that eventually eve undazzling a foreigner as Kneller enjoyed a merited popularity. At last came an English with a genius for painting—Hogarth. But of taste had come to think of painting as a p foreign art; and to earn his living Hog concentrated upon anecdotic pictures that c be engraved to gratify the moral tastes of bourgeoisie. These are indeed remarkable, a few of his other pictures reveal him Fragonard *manque*. Gainsborough was alr delicacy alike of feeling and of touch to Wat but he degenerated into a fashionable por painter, and his genius shows chiefly in landscapes he painted for his own plea Lawrence was another wonderful victim of powerful who craved for flattery. Bl accomplishment was inferior to his vi Palmer went to pieces. Turner was too c the prey of his own facility, though throug his life he continued to produce works reve his prodigious genius. Between Turner Sickert there is nobody, though an occas picture reveals that talent was not lacking. Madox Brown, for instance, had uncom gifts; nor was Landseer the duffer that his and dogs suggest. Constable, one conclu has perhaps been the only English painter gifted with genius and able to make the mo this gift.

Evidently we can justly throw a great respo bility upon the picture-buying public. But at the parallel history of French painting. did none of Chardin's English contempor possess his single-mindedness? And late Pissarro and a Claude Monet and a Sisley on potatoes in order to remain faithful to vision. Has there not been in the Englishm weakness of character, or at least a lack of viction?

The problem has not ceased to be actual. leaps at us from two handsome books on Augu John and Wilson Steer, both of them mendably low-priced, with well-chosen and printed reproductions. (My one complain that in these, as in other Phaidon books, pictures are arranged not chronologically according to their subjects—an arrangement strikes me as superficial and confusing.) was born with extraordinary powers. W anyone, comparing his first pictures with of Matisse and Bonnard, maintain that he less gifted than they? But the greater enthusiasm for his early work, the more de one is liable to be disappointed by his later ca How beautiful are the paintings of "Dore and his children, how happily he harmonises figures with the Celtic landscapes in which dream or glower. The young John projected to canvas an imaginative world brimming romantic beauty. Then turn to the later w the accomplishment remains, but it is as if th were flickering. Instead of poetry, there is a rhetoric influenced by El Greco. Apart fro few deeply felt portraits, like those of Hardy Mr. Hone, we find much to astonish, but litt move, us. What has happened? Mr. Rot stein in his thoughtful Introduction keeps ski the problem, but is too polite to face it.

After presenting John as first and foremo draughtsman—"His painting is most mast when it approximates most closely to drawing he insists upon the rapidity with which he wo an *improvisatore*, either effortlessly produ masterpieces, or failing because he cannot the small alteration necessary. (Is there not a parallel with D. H. Lawrence?) Mr. Rot stein defines wisely Mr. John's passi

mpathy with gypsies and others who live dventurous, abundant lives."

If John had continued to devote himself to the ortrayal of types of men and women who have esisted the pressure of urban civilisation, and reserved their primitive impulses, we should ossess a uniquely splendid and dramatic portrait f a vanishing aspect of Britain. But life is not kind o artists. . . .

e only unkindness mentioned is the refusal of patron, public or private, to commission ge wall-paintings from John. And indeed it is l that among the many very rich men in gland there was not one to commission a nted room from John—or for that matter from isse or Bonnard. But this omission did not n Matisse and Bonnard into fashionable rtrait-painters. "Life is not kind to artists"? one sense life has been kind to the Frenchmen, t because they have been content to care for hing but their painting. Ironically this has led by bringing them even a wealth that an glish painter might justly envy.

One can argue that Mr. John has preferred life art—and philosophers will differ about the acity of this choice. Another explanation is t he is a romantic painter, and that romantics all the arts do their best work when young. here is not much great romantic poetry written elderly men.) But I am not sure how far er hypothesis is sufficient, and the case of lson Steer increases this uncertainty.

is beginnings were at least as brilliant as gustus John's: his Walberswick pictures eal a finely personal vision, and their technique strikingly original. Then the decline set in, l by 1910 he was painting pictures (two of them roduced by Mr. Ironside) of a banality that ld hardly be surpassed even in Burlington use. But this did not last; and his main tput was a mass of honourable, well painted dscapes that provoke unfortunate comparisons h Constable or Gainsborough; and a mass of ful water-colours, in which, with certain isite exceptions, elegance dwindles to a mula. Even at its best, his later work never the imaginative force that distinguished his ginnings.

Yet Steer's devotion to his art was priest-like. Frenchman has been more entirely dedicated. Life" never deflected his energies; he remained enobitic seclusion. (His friend George Moore ttly described him as "an improved cat.") hat, then, went wrong? It has been suggested t Tonks, a brilliant man though a mediocre nter, exercised a calamitous influence, but this is true, I fancy, only of a small group of pictures. Mr. Ironside's interesting introduction throws no light. Indeed he writes as if the problem did not exist (doubtless thinking better than I do of the late pictures, and less well of the early ones). All he says is this:

> There is a progressive Toryism about his art which effectively shielded him from the dangers, noble though these are, of experimentalism.

It did indeed. But in any case it isn't "experimentalism" or its absence that matters. The trouble with Steer's later pictures is that they lack intensity. They seem to be not so much inventions springing from an imaginative experience as exercises resembling the Latin verses written at Oxford. Steer painted better, I think, than any of his English contemporaries except Sickert, but after the age of forty he had little of interest to tell us. It is as if he had ceased to feel. The history of French painting, of course, also contains disappointments. Léon Bonnat, for instance, sacrificed a delightful gift to become a prosperous portrait-painter; and, in our own time, Derain has degenerated from noble beginnings into a flash virtuosity. But how rare have been such instances! I am tempted to conclude that the superiority of French painting (which only the most bigoted Jingoes can deny) has been due less to superiority in talent than to a more conscientious or at least a more persistent employment of talent.

I have left myself room only to recommend without detailed criticism the latest Gallery Books. Mr. Pope-Hennessy's *Rout of San Romano* and Sir Kenneth Clark's *Hay Wain* set a standard so high that their successors might well feel discouraged. But Mr. Clive Bell and Mr. Stuart Preston write with gusto and knowledge. *Les Parapluies* offers Mr. Bell a highly congenial subject, of which he has taken the fullest advantage. My only objection is that he avoids the central æsthetic problem posed by the picture. The change in style that occurred while it was being painted is so marked that it might almost be the work of two men. Fascinating as the picture is, does not this duality deprive it of any title to be considered one of Renoir's masterpieces? Mr. Preston's liveliness of style is hardly inferior to the erudition he carries so gracefully, and his account of a Titian that is unfamiliar to most Englishmen could not be bettered. I hardly dare venture the criticism, but is not the bull's head uncomfortably small? The reproductions in both these books are a delight.

ROGER MARVELL

THE SPORT OF GLIDING

Soaring Flight. The Art of Gliding. By TERENCE HORSLEY. *Eyre and Spottiswoode.* 16*s.*

Probably many of the men in the Airborne Divisions would now say that they never wished to see a glider again, and would believe that they spoke the truth. But there is little doubt that a large number of them will seek opportunities of handling gliders and sailplanes in the years to come. They are advised to read Terence Horsley's book, which is an extremely thorough account of the science and art of gliding and soaring as it had developed when it was put an end to by the war. It is technical, scientific and full of personal narratives of adventure contributed by the leading experts.

The first stage of gliding began with the towing or catapulting of an extremely light engineless aircraft downhill into the wind so that when it had taken off it should be supported by an upcurrent. If the current of air was going up faster than the sink of the glider in still air, the glider could stay up suspended—like a ping-pong ball in a shooting gallery fountain. Thus on suitable hillsides and ridges it is possible to fly up and down in the uprush of air almost indefinitely when the wind is in the right direction.

The next stage was the unexpected discovery of "thermals." On a normal summer's day the sun rises in a cloudless sky, but within a few hours big white cumulus clouds rising up like castles and snow mountains appear from nowhere in particular. Their genesis is as follows. The sun does not heat up the air equally but in patches. Thus over a tiled and slated town, or over an expanse of dry and beaten earth, the sun's rays are reflected and heat up the air much faster than over a leafy expanse of woodland or over sea. Above such spots a huge bubble of heated air forms and when it has reached a certain size leaves the ground and floats upwards more or less intact. As it rises through the colder air it steadily expands in size owing to the diminution of pressure around it, and when it has been cooled sufficiently by the cold air into which it rises the vapour inside it condenses and becomes visible as cloud. The art of soaring depends on discovering such a "thermal" in its early stages, in being lifted by it, and in remaining in it as long as it is safe to do so. For as cloud joins with cloud, the acceleration and turbulence within the cloud increase. If the

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sailplane pilot after being towed or catapulted a few hundreds of feet into the air picks up a "thermal" he may be able to rise to ten or twenty thousand feet with considerable rapidity. It is not, so far as one can judge from Mr. Horsley, a very pleasant process—for a "thermal" is in its nature turbulent and bumpy, the temperature falls rapidly, pressure becomes reduced and visibility vanishes in cloud. Conditions are ideal for developing air-sickness. Finally, as the sailplane reaches the top of the cloud the stresses become so great that it is likely to disintegrate and its iced-up occupant may have to take to his parachute. In practice, the pilot usually emerges from his cloud when he has stood as much buffeting as he feels ready to endure, and then comes his reward—he is several thousand feet up and can glide wherever he wants to go. If he wants to travel across country he can frequently contrive to attach himself to another "thermal" and gain more height and so on.

There is obviously an immense fascination in flying without an engine; and with the kind of sailplane that existed before the war, and which will doubtless be improved, it should be possible to soar in England whenever the sky is not completely overcast. Indeed, if the sailplane pilot can obtain an aeroplane tow, he can soar whenever the weather is not too foul.

One of the great pleasures which the advanced sailplane pilot can share with the man who sails a canoe, or small boat, is that he can design and build his own craft.

The enormous improvements in power-driven aircraft—the enclosed cabin, wireless, and higher speeds have made flying much less attractive as a sport than it was a quarter of a century ago. Soaring seems less susceptible to being improved out of existence.

The London Gliding Club has just held its first meeting since the war, at Dunstable. Now seems to be the time to join.

DAVID GARNETT

WEBSTER

The Duchess of Malfi. By JOHN WEBSTER. With introductory essays by George Rylands and Charles Williams. Illustrated by Michael Ayrton. *Sylvan Press.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

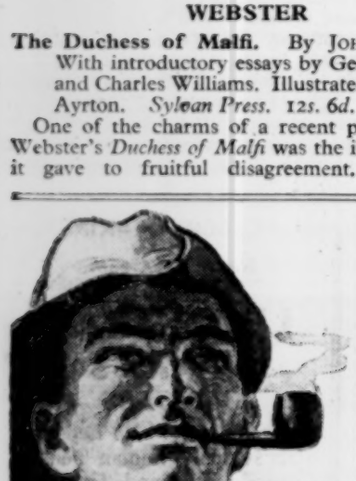
One of the charms of a recent production of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* was the incentive that it gave to fruitful disagreement. Take, for example, the part of Bosola. Personally, I was much impressed by the gusto with which Mr. Cecil Trouncer threw himself into this extremely arduous role, but felt that his interpretation made up in ogreish energy what it lacked in subtlety, and tended to overlook the historical background of that prodigious villain. Bosola, surely, typifies, from the Elizabethan point of view, the Italianate adventurer. He has his counterpart in many other Elizabethan tragedies, and his origins in a social class that had been much in evidence since the social upheavals of the English Reformation: he is the masterless man, "as short in cash as he is in honour," discontented and dispossessed, who has tasted the corruption of many courts and cities, and offers his wits and his rapier to any great man who will promise him advancement. There is also in his composition (as in the composition of most Elizabethan desperadoes) a touch of that dark bogy-man of the Renaissance, Nicolo Machiavelli. And, to portray him with the style and dash that one admirer at least believes to be his due, would require rather more polish and courtly insinuation than Mr. Trouncer at the Haymarket seemed prepared to lend him. He must be not only villainous, but a villain of the period.

Similarly, Miss Ashcroft's presentation of the Duchess, though remarkably well sustained, had certain obvious weaknesses. This is not the place to discuss them at length; nor can one embark on an attempt at a detailed examination of Webster's masterpiece. As the revival showed, *The Duchess of Malfi* is a play that can be enjoyed on its dramatic merits without the help of scholarship. The Elizabethan attitude towards life was in many respects fundamentally unlike our own; but all ages meet on the plane of art, and poetry is the great dissolver of intellectual differences. That John Webster belonged to the first rank of English poets now strikes us as unquestionable. And he was, at his best, both a superb poet and an exceptionally gifted dramatist. Apart from Shakespeare, that fusion of the two gifts does not appear very often in the Elizabethan drama. Or it appears intermittently. "From time to time (writes Mr. George Rylands, in a valuable introdution he has contributed to this new edition of the 'Duchess') . . . now for a whole scene, now in an isolated speech, now in a single line, the two arts join hands only to part; and when we close the book or when the curtain falls, we acknowledge a divided response, even a sense of frustration . . . Webster comes nearer to fusion than most of his contemporaries, but the fusion is fitful. Sometimes the poet speaks, sometimes the dramatist contrives." To the question whether the fusion is never quite complete, different critics will, of course, supply entirely different answers. May it not have had something to do with Webster's view (shared, to some extent, by John Ford) of human personality? Each character, in a tragedy, seems to inhabit his own separate [illegible]. There is Ferdinand, who dwells within the circle of his black "mellencholy humour," a "pestilent disease" as the Doctor calls it: the Cardinal, a prisoner of choleric pride: their sister given up to a passion of amorous longing. The hells they move in are contiguous but do not overlap. Webster could delineate with [illegible] violent strokes an individual character, but he could not show the relationships between characters and character that make up the true groundwork of intelligible human conduct. The Duchess loves Antonio; but Antonio is a dummy, an object and victim of his mistress's desire rather than a human being who shares and understands it. The "humours" are still supreme: their predominance produces the effect of a large mechanistic universe, in which there is ample room for a poet's fancy (when he descants in noble lines on the nature of human sorrows) but seldom opportunity for a dramatist to reveal the delicate interplay, the gradual development, of individual feelings. Thus Webster, in spite of his immense gifts, failed to achieve that satisfying fusion which Mr. Rylands speaks of. The present reprint, besides Mr. Rylands's foreword, contains a provocative, if slightly obscure, essay by the late Charles Williams, and is based on the text established by Mr. F. L. Lucas in Webster's Complete Works, published in four volumes several years ago.

PETER QUENNELL

Psychology and the Social Pattern, by JUL[illegible] BLACKBURN. *Kegan Paul.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

This book gives a useful introduction into problems of contemporary psychology. Its strength consists rather in lucid summaries of those views "authorities" hold on a variety of problems (Belief, Remembering, Intelligence, Ability, Motivation, etc., than in putting forward original solutions. Considering the present state of psychology as a service this method has the advantage of being safe; *e.g.*, Dr. Blackburn writes on p. 113, *seq.*: "The influence of the cultural environment on differences in sexual behaviour could be illustrated very well by the different customs and moves of Christian civilization. . . . A comparative analysis of these differ[illegible]



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is not so far been worked out in any detail, but we ay turn to Mead's brilliant analysis of three primitive mmunities to illustrate what we have in mind" the influence of the cultural environment on differ- ces in sexual behaviour *can* be illustrated, why not strate it? This extreme reliance on "authorities" typical for a book of an introductory nature. It also extensive and fine bibliographies which may lp the general reader not to lose his way amongst embarrassing multitude of warring psychologies.

Week-end Competitions

No. 816

t by William Whitebait

Competitors are invited to write a pub-crawl in se. Not more than fourteen lines. Entries by ptember 25th.

ESULT OF COMPETITION No. 813

t by G. W. Stonier

The usual prizes are offered for a letter—or an extract from a letter—written during the holiday season by an animal in the Zoo to a relative still at large abroad. Limit, 200 words.

eport by G. W. Stonier

I had hoped for at least one letter of magnificent om from a tiger, an eagle or a mandrill reflecting on the drab humanity walking about the Gardens. ter all, in looks the average human being is inferior nine-tenths of the caged animals and birds he goes stare at. No competitor taking that point of view hieved more than a weary sarcasm.

But there were other points of view in plenty and st of them lively enough. Allan Laing provides a rming note in the vernacular; I liked the calmly ying tones of R. J. P. Hewison's correspondent bear, it would seem), and the priestly dignity of an recorded animal, the "llhama." These three djvide first prize of four guineas. A guinea each goes Pantarei and Sub-Lieut. J. R. Till.

FIRST PRIZE.

THE SKUNK WRITES HOME.

STALAG X, LONDON.

Dear Old B.O.,—Hoping you'll get this Ok as it es me at presnt. I am not doin so bad and hope you the same thouh missin wot they calls the wide n spases as you know. The food here is good but no flaver at all hardly and you cant get no privvasy neether, not that I am as bad off as some I could name, thousands of them too-leged faint-smellers peepein and prying all day, they dont poke me with no stiks not —— likely, they lets me alown you bet, the little ones is the werst so they say espeshly in wot they calls the ollerdyes wich is on now. Well dear B.O. I am keepin the old Flagg flying, they wanted me to broadcast, not me I sez, I aint no Seydlitz, they tried to press me but I convinsed them you know my methods Watson an they give up. Well ow are you old Boy, have you used the old sprinkler lately well all the best, keep your pelt on is wot I sez so no more at prezent from yours aff. STINKER

ALLAN M. LAING

I still look to see you in Here. Cramped at first, perhaps, but still scope for exercise—and, all day, Human to look at. He is not a handsome creature at best, and seldom at best: nearly always too fat or too thin, or lame or bent. We, if we ran to that sort of thing, wouldn't last five minutes Out There.

But he *is* amusing, and his antics in summer—when he swarms—are particularly so. This summer has been very good. For some years past there have been bad thunderstorms: some of our houses were damaged, and some of us went away. Human swarms were much reduced. Now the weather is much better, and he is back in numbers.

To see him and his mate and cubs trailing round our houses for our amusement is a perpetual feast. Mostly æsthetic now, though: the buns are poorer than before the Bad Weather, and Human has no fruit to offer. Still, even that enhances our pleasure, as we note how *his* provender has worsened while ours is much the same. He looks rather tired, too, for all his cheerfulness, and his colours, except what he carries in his hand, have faded . . .

R. J. P. HEWISON

Greetings, Great Llhama.

We in England wish you to know that the Great Quiet of daytime is over; and the gods no longer are wrathful during the Great Noise of the night. We hope that the gods are considering our prayer, that we may return again to Tibet.

Meantime the holiday season is here, and the stone walks echo to the sound of many feet. Our brothers in the Barred Places are stared at by many eyes; we, the ride-givers, are heavily laden. I regret to report that my cousin the other day sat down under the weight of a girl of Many Moons.

Memory is short, and I can no longer picture the peace and freedom of my native land. Do not, I beseech you, my father, send word of the joys I cannot share with you. Rather join your prayers to mine, that I may return again to Tibet.

Fond remembrances to all my kind,
and to you, Wise One, my respectful love,
Your Son.

SYLVIA NEWNHAM

BOB BABIROUSSA TO HIS COUSIN JOHN CELEBES ISLANDS.

My Dear Jack,

It has taken a fortnight to get over what is called here a bank holiday (I remark in parenthesis that we see who runs these talkative animals). A repetition of the same noise may be charm—you remember we discussed this some time ago—but to hear "OO-ER" and "WHAT'S HE GOT THEM FOR?" twenty thousand times in one day is anything but charming.

They refer, of course, to our magnificently arched teeth which even the philosopher Schopenhauer could not explain, although he at least paid us the tribute of admiration. But these noisy creatures are for ever explaining. If they like explanations, well and good; I prefer maize and I must say that this is served faultlessly twice a day by my attendant. It is better than we used to get at home, and my attendant is not entirely imbecile. But I feel sleepy and as my attendant is just bringing some straw, I shall close, make my bed and lie on it, as these talkative islanders say.

Remember me to all the family,

As ever, BOB

PANTAREI

FROM ALMOST ANY ANIMAL TO ALMOST ANY RELATIVE.

Do you remember that day in the wilds when we thought we were being followed—by our own shadows?

Over here, coz, my followers are more substantial. Oh, these Poor Pink Bipeds! They stare at me in such a submissive way that I now realise they regard me as a kind of god. Yes, that explains everything—the constant pilgrimages, the homage I receive from young and old, the pathetic look of so many P.P.B.'s who have obviously been fasting. Think what you're missing!

At specially-appointed times one of the High Priests comes into the temple, bows low, and lays before me the most succulent dishes. I am so touched by this act of devotion on the part of my people, pale and undernourished as many of them are, that my heart melts with pity and I feel almost ashamed that I—a free animal enjoying the status of a minor deity—should be allowed such luxury and privilege while all these P.P.B.'s are leading a dog's life in captivity. What they really need, I think, after all these compulsory rites is a *holiday*.

J. R. TILL

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